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A PAGEANT OF INDIA

BY

ADOLF WALEY

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TO

MY DEAR MOTHER

I DEDICATE

MY "PAGEANT OF INDIA"

IN LOVING GRATITUDE FOR HER

NEVER-FAILING SYMPATHY WITH MY WISH

TO MAKE ITS ACTORS LIVE AGAIN

PREFACE

THROUGHOUT this volume I have given the names of all the authorities I have consulted, and amongst these I should like to make special mention of the late Mr. William Irvine, whose translation of Manucci's *Storia do Mogor* has been of incalculable assistance to me. I likewise owe a great debt of gratitude to Mr. C. A. Kincaid and to the late Rao Bahadur D. B. Parasnis for their joint work, *A History of the Maratha People*, and finally to Professor Jadunath Sarkar, from whose *History of Aurangzeb* I have frequently quoted.

It has been my desire that the actors in this Pageant should, wherever possible, speak for themselves in their own words as handed down by ancient tradition or as revealed by the historians of those days.

A. W.

November 1926.

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PART I

CHAPTER I

THE DAWN OF HISTORY

Think in this battered Caravanserai,
Whose doorways are alternate night and day,
How Sultán after Sultán with his pomp
Abode his hour or two and went his way.
FITZGERALD'S *Omar Khayyam.*

IN order to reach a correct understanding of Indian history and its extraordinary tangle of racial and religious movements, its disputes and its wars, it is above all necessary to realise that although India is counted a part of the Continent of Asia, she is in point of fact a continent in herself.

Hinduism is the religion of the Rajputs of Mewar and Bikanir, of the Mahrattas of the Deccan and Central India and of the Dravidian races of the South, just as Christianity is the faith of the great majority of the population of the numerous countries in Europe.

It is racially where the great difference occurs amongst the Hindus of India, just as much as amongst the nationalities of Europe.

The Moslem population of India, which constitutes, in point of numbers, the next greatest community, is equally varied as regards race, some claiming descent from the Turki, Pathan and Moghul conquering races, others having become converts from Hinduism to Islam, whilst in the Far South, the Moplahs of Malabar are the descendants of Arab sailors, who, as long as five or six hundred years ago, when trading with the Malabar Coast, married Hindu women who resided there ; these, though fanatical Moslems by religion, abide in all other matters by Hindu law and custom.

During the earliest period of Indian history, the entire Indian Peninsula was inhabited by wild aboriginal tribes of the most primitive description. They exist up to the present

day ; some, such as the Bhils and Minas of Central India and Rajputana, have somewhat mitigated their ancient barbarism under the influence of Hindu civilisation, whilst others, such as the Khonds of the Ganjam district of Madras and the Todas of the Neilgherry Hills, retain all their primitive savagery.

Aryan invasion.

India was considered an uncivilised country until the recent discoveries by Sir John Marshall at Mohenjo Daro in Sind and by Mr. Banerji at Harappa in the Punjab showed that a very high civilisation existed in Western and Northern India prior to the Aryan Conquest.

The Aryas, at the time of their entry into India from their original home in Central Asia, approximately 2500 B.C., resembled the ancient Israelites inasmuch as they were a pastoral, wandering people, who led a simple life, their wealth depending upon the size of their herds and flocks, and who possessed, like the Israelites, a highly civilised and idealistic religion.

Though in some ways resembling modern Hinduism and drawing its inspirations from the four Sacred Books known as the Vedas, the faith of the ancient Aryas was a far simpler, gentler and more poetic one.

They believed in one God, Brahma, the Creator, but also worshipped the elements and wonders of nature such as, for instance, Dawn represented by a Goddess called Usha, to whom some of the most beautiful Vedic hymns are dedicated. The first part of India to become an Aryan settlement was a tract of territory in the Punjab situated between the Caggar and the Saraswati rivers, to which they gave the name of Brahmavarta and where, by degrees, they built their first city, Hastinapura.

The first settlement, representing to the Aryas the earliest permanent home of their race in Hindustan, is up to this day looked upon by all Hindus as sacred ground, and the ancient Shrine of Thanesar is one of the greatest centres of Hindu pilgrimage.

The big upheaval from a nomadic to a settled existence was bound also to involve a change in the political and social organisation of the Aryas.

Hitherto they had been an essentially democratic people with no hereditary leaders, being governed by elected chiefs called Lords of the Settlement, and allowing no class distinction.

With their permanent settlement on Indian soil, however, this simple form of government began to disappear. Certain

families amongst the Aryas embraced priesthood and, as such, interpreted the Vedas to the mass of the people; others adopted a military career, whilst others again became agriculturists and merchants.

Thus there grew up that institution which formed the basis of ancient Hindu society as it does also of modern, having survived unshaken throughout the ages, the institution of Caste.

It was not, however, until the completion of the famous institutes of the great Hindu lawgiver Manu in the year 500 B.C. that the Hindu political and social system was given its definite form.

From this moment the Aryas exchanged the primitive tribal organisation of their nomadic days for a definite State system. In each of the many areas to which they penetrated, a powerful state came into being with a monarch at its head. These areas extended into the heart of Central, Eastern and eventually Southern India, and, in order to make their progress possible, the Aryas crushed the aboriginal tribes and incorporated them into the Aryan political and social system.

It was the Code of Manu which gave formal and permanent shape to the caste system by dividing it into four great castes—the Brahmins or priests, the Kshatryas or princes and warriors, the Vaisyas or merchants and agriculturists, and lastly the Sudras or serfs.

The highest caste always has been, and will always remain, the Brahmins, but the Kshatryas and the Vaisyas share with the Brahmins the distinction of being considered "twice born" and are not allowed to marry outside their own caste.

The Sudras, who, at the present day, number amongst their caste some even of the most powerful reigning princes, were, at the time of the inauguration of the caste system, drawn partly from the low-class Aryas and conquered aboriginal tribes, and partly from the descendants of Aryas who after invading the country had married some of its inhabitants. They were looked upon merely as hewers of wood and drawers of water to the three aristocratic castes.

With the development of the caste system among the Aryas and their organisation into states, Sanskrit, the classic tongue of the Brahmins, always a beautiful and highly cultivated one, attained its highest degree of perfection.

A splendid Sanskrit literature came into being, of which the finest examples are the two great epic poems, the

The Sanskrit epics.

Mahabharata of Vyasa and the Ramayana of Valmiki. Of these two poems the first has as its central theme the rivalry and war between the Pandavas and Kauravas, the Lunar Kshatrya Princes of Indraprastha and Hastinapura, while the second is the history of the abduction of Sita, the beautiful wife of Rama, the Solar King of Ajodhya, by Ravana, King of Ceylon, the conquest of Ceylon by Rama, his rescue of Sita and the death of Ravana in the battle which ensued.

It is not too much to say that these two epics, though they cannot be considered religious works, have in the past exercised a great moral influence over the national, spiritual and social ideals of the Hindus, an influence which continues undiminished up to the present day and which is equal to that of the Sacred Books.

The Rajput of the present day, be he soldier, noble or prince, almost unconsciously takes as his model either Rama, the highest representative of Hindu chivalry, courage and statesmanship, or Yudhisthira, Arjuna or Bhishma, the heroes of the Mahabharata.

The influence of these epics is quite as potent in forming the ideals of the Hindu women as in guiding the men. The Hindu wife who would emphasise her devotion to her husband almost invariably compares herself to Sita, who remained true to her lord Rama through all the perils of her captivity in Ceylon, or to Savitri, one of the heroines of the Mahabharata who, by her fervent love for her husband Satyavan, prevailed upon Yama, God of Death, to restore him to life.

Even the lower castes, unable as they are to read the epics either in the original Sanskrit or in the modern renderings, will gather together at some street corner and listen spellbound to a public story-teller relating the adventures of Rama and Sita, or those of the Pandava brothers and Draupadi.

We shall realise the influence of these epics when dealing with the long struggle for independence by the Rajputs against Mohammedan domination, which shows the devotion of the Rajput nobles to their chiefs and the splendid part played by the Rajput women.

The growth of Aryan civilisation and the change from the rigid simplicity to a life of luxury was the signal for an even greater change in the Aryan religion.

The Brahmins, who had formerly acted merely as the interpreters of the Sacred Vedas, acquired by degrees the

character of a haughty and exclusive priesthood, considering themselves far superior to the two other "twice-born" castes, and living often in the very greatest luxury.

They substituted an elaborate ritual in place of the simple worship of the Vedic gods, installing as deities the Hindu Trimurti or Triad: Brahma, the Creator, Vishnu, the Preserver, Siva, the Destroyer and Reproducer. The low castes, comprising the Sudras and the members of the aboriginal tribes, were more and more trampled upon by the spiritual and social tyranny of the Brahmins, and even the Kshatryas, the royal warrior caste, were not untouched by its effects. These sweeping changes, cruel though they were, paved the way for the coming of India's greatest religious reformer Gautama, the Buddha, who was destined to found one of the most powerful religions of mankind.

Coming of the Buddha.

In his early manhood Prince Siddartha Gautama, son of Suddhodana, King of Kapilavastu, seems to have led much the same life as was usual at that period amongst royally born Kshatryas, dividing his time between the chase and watching the dances of the nautch girls, and not infrequently fighting in the innumerable wars which swept the country in those days.

In his early twenties, Siddartha married his cousin Yasodhara, daughter of the Raja of Koli, having wooed and won her according to the old Kshatrya custom by competing with other aspirants to her hand, in fencing, wrestling, horsemanship and bending the bow. Endowed with great beauty and possessing rare gifts of intellect, Yasodhara was as devoted to her husband as he was to her, and it would have seemed as though there was nothing lacking to make Siddartha satisfied and happy with his lot in life.

Later events, however, prove that this very happiness, far from allowing him to give himself up to peaceful enjoyment, brought about such a chastening effect upon his whole character and way of thinking, that it laid the foundation for the Great Renunciation.

During his daily rides through the streets of Kapilavastu, Siddartha came more and more to notice the tyranny of the Brahmin priesthood, the misery of the poor, and above all the great gulf dividing the people from their rulers. Faced by the tragedy around him, he gradually conceived in his mind the idea of becoming the teacher of a new and purer religion, which should lift up the downtrodden and bring comfort to those so cruelly oppressed. With this desire came the conviction that he could become the

exponent of this doctrine only by abandoning the pleasures and ambitions of the world and clothing himself in the spiritual garments of an ascetic.

Ten years after their marriage Yasodhara bore him a son, Rahula by name, and very soon after this event Siddartha took the decisive step of his life, the Great Renunciation. In Buddhist Scripture we read vividly painted descriptions of the scene, when Siddartha, his resolution finally taken, prepares to leave wife and child, to abandon princely powers and to become a Buddha or Enlightened One ; in other words, to free himself from all earthly desires, hopes and fears. We see him go for the last time to the room in the palace where Yasodhara and her infant are sleeping, with the intention of giving his dear ones a final embrace, but he refrains from doing so for fear of arousing them from their slumber. Then mounting his horse, and accompanied only by Channa his faithful charioteer, he rides out into the night, leaving his old life for ever behind him.

After sojourning with some Brahmin ascetics in a cave near Rajagriha in the Vindhyas, Siddartha, now known as Sakya Muni, or the sage of the Sakya,[1] wandered to the village of Uruvela in Bihar, begging his way as he went. Here he took up his post under a bo or pipal tree, and it was here, according to the Buddhist Scriptures, that he eventually attained " Buddahood " or Enlightenment, after successfully resisting all the lures and temptations of Mara the Evil One.

To-day this spot is marked by the great temple of Buddh Gaya which, with the sacred Bo Tree, signifies to millions of Buddhists one of the holiest places upon earth, and is one of the greatest centres of pilgrimage for members of that faith.

The Buddha's first religious campaign, after he had attained enlightenment, was to betake himself to the deer park of Sarnath on the outskirts of Benares, where he preached his new doctrine to the people. The keynote of his teaching was that salvation was within the grasp of all men, high or low, and depended solely upon the life they led.

By these means, whilst not openly attacking the Brahmins, he destroyed the myth, so long accepted, of their status as a privileged class, possessing the sole right of acting as mediators between the other castes and the Gods ; and thus held out to the aboriginal races and the low-caste Hindus a vista of hope for the future. Further,

[1] Sakya was the dynastic name of the Kapilavastu House.

the Buddha taught, as the fundamental part of his doctrine, that after death the human soul is reborn into a fresh body ; thus continuing its earthly peregrinations until, having attained perfection, it becomes merged into the universal soul and attains Nirvana.

From Sarnath the Buddha sent forth sixty disciples, who were instructed to teach his doctrine, named The Most Excellent Law, to the population in different parts of the country.

At the same time he instituted the " Sangha " or Society, the Buddhist Monastic Order, which, being open without distinction of caste to all men who took the vows, was likely to result in great numbers of proselytes recruited from the lowest castes ; whilst his princely birth and connection with many of the Indian reigning families, brought him followers from amongst the noblest in the land.

Seven years from the night of his dramatic departure from Kapilavastu, Gautama re-entered the ancient capital, walking through the streets, formerly the scene of his triumphal progress in his state chariot, clad in his humble yellow monk's robe and carrying in place of his sword a begging bowl.

At the palace he was welcomed by his father, his brother, and many of the women of the palace, Yasodhara alone not being there to greet him.

King Suddhodana, divining the question which his son's lips had not dared to formulate, told him that Yasodhara's love was unchanged but, fearing that she might prove unable to resist the temptation of embracing him and thus causing him to violate his monastic vows to be touched by no woman, she had remained absent.

" Let her come," replied the Buddha. Yasodhara came holding the boy Rahula by the hand, her heart steeled into betraying no emotion.

On recognising in the shaven monk in his yellow garment the young Kshatrya whom she had last seen in his splendid robes, her fortitude gave way and she burst into tears, throwing herself upon the ground and embracing the Buddha's knees.

Gautama raised her from the ground and, after a while, succeeded in comforting her with the assurance that women also held a place in his teachings. As a result he, in later years, founded the Order of Buddhist Nuns, of which Yasodhara became one of the leading members, devoting the remainder of her life to spreading his doctrine amongst

her countrywomen. King Suddhodana also became a convert, and the Buddha's son Rahula, when he reached manhood, entered the Sangha as a monk.

The Buddha died at Kusinagara, seventy miles from Benares, about 480 B.C., tended during his last illness by his disciples, more especially by his cousin Ananda, the most devoted one of all.

His teachings, though they did not during his lifetime nor after his death succeed in overthrowing the dominant Brahminism, gained an immense number of adherents belonging to the highest and the lowest castes; and up to the present day Buddhism, whilst practically extinct in the land of its birth, retains an undiminished hold upon the minds of millions of men and women in Tibet, Burma, Ceylon and the Far East.

The life of Buddha, the causes of the spiritual revolution which he strove to bring about, the names and personalities of his chief disciples, are, thanks to the Buddhist Scriptures, preserved to posterity in a wonderfully complete way; the political history of India, however, during the years following immediately upon the rise of Buddhism, remains most obscure. We know that in different parts of the country there existed powerful kingdoms ruled by royal Kshatrya dynasties, claiming descent from the Sun and the Moon.

Development of the Hindu state system.

Notable amongst these was the House of Rama at Ajodhya, the kingdom of Mithila in Bengal, and lastly, that of Magadha, the modern Bihar, ruled at that time by a dynasty of possible Scythian descent, known as the Saisunaga or Snake dynasty. This kingdom was destined, under another reigning family, to play a vital part in the future history of India.

This chapter attempts to put as briefly as the subject allows the condition of India previous to the year 327 B.C., when the invasion by the Macedonian Greek armies under Alexander the Great marked the commencement of her more authentic history by bringing her into touch with the outside world.

CHAPTER II

MACEDONIAN AND MAURYA

THE invasion of India by Alexander the Great marks the zenith of his power. The decisive battle of Gaugamela on October 1, 331 B.C., followed shortly by the death of Darius, had left the whole vast empire built up by Cyrus the Great and the throne of Persia at the conqueror's mercy.

From this moment Alexander's policy and consequently the whole character of his rule was subject to a complete fundamental change. From having impersonated an essentially Western conqueror and upholder of Hellenic civilisation in the East, Alexander now assumed the part of an Oriental despot and looked upon himself as the rightful heir of the Achaemenian kings.

His splendid court at Babylon, the capital of his great Eastern Empire, was fashioned upon the model of the courts of Cyrus, Artaxerxes and Darius, and Alexander, when appearing in public, usually clad himself in the robes of state of a Persian King of Kings.

His dream was a united Grecian and Persian empire, and to attain this ideal he attempted, by marrying all his Macedonian officers to Persian wives, to bring about a fusion between the two races. He himself openly adopted the Oriental custom of polygamy by marrying first the Bactrian Princess Roxana, originally his captive, whom he raised to the rank of Queen, and later Statira, daughter of Darius, and also Parysatis, daughter of Ochus.

Alexander's ambition was boundless and was not satisfied by merely occupying the throne of Artaxerxes and Darius. His desire was not only to emulate but to exceed their achievements. Under these circumstances it was only natural that his lust for further conquest should draw him towards the vast and almost unknown land of India, which,

excepting as far as the Indus, had never been penetrated even by the armies of the greatest of the Persian kings.

Alexander invades India.

Early in the year 327 B.C., Alexander, at the head of an army of 120,000 men, advanced over the Hindu Kush and the mountains of Afghanistan, overcoming all opposition,[1] and, after crossing the Indus at the small town of Ohind, sixteen miles above the modern fortress of Attock, found himself at the gates of Taxila, a large city in the Punjab, which appears to have been the capital of a kingdom of considerable extent, and was at that time ruled over by a prince of Scythian origin. This prince, Omphis by name, realising the futility of offering resistance to Alexander's overwhelming numbers, opened his gates to the conqueror and joined his army with a force of 5000 men.

Strengthened by these reinforcements, Alexander continued his march to the river Hydaspes, the modern Jhelum. At this juncture Alexander met with a very different reception. He found his passage barred by Porus, the elder of the two princes of that name who between them ruled over a great part of the Punjab, at the head of an army composed of 30,000 infantry, 4000 cavalry, 300 chariots and 200 elephants.

Alexander rose to the situation confronting him with that mingled daring and consummate military genius so characteristic of him.

Halting his army in a bend of the Jhelum not far from the spot where, centuries later, the British and Sikh armies were to fight the battle of Chillianwallah, he attempted no further move until there arose one night one of those sudden and violent storms typical of the tropics.

Under cover of the night, the sound of their movements being drowned by the roar of the tempest, Alexander and his whole army effected a crossing of the Jhelum unopposed, and, with the dawn of another day, the astounded Indians beheld the entire Macedonian army drawn up ready for battle.

Porus promptly took up the challenge and a desperate and at first indecisive struggle ensued, during which Alexander himself narrowly escaped death.

Ultimately, however, Porus and his army were doomed to

[1] One of the incidents of this opening campaign was the capture of the great rock fortress of Aornos, which is of special interest at the present moment owing to Sir Aurel Stein's recent discovery that the mountain peak of Yuna in the remote district of Torwal in Swat Kohistan is the original site of the famous stronghold.

suffer defeat. The torrential rains of the previous night had turned the banks of the Jhelum into a huge morass in which the heavy scythed wheels of the Indian war chariots stuck fast and thus became immovable. The elephants, terrified by the arrows which the Macedonian archers rained upon them, made no attempt to charge them but turned and broke trumpeting into the rear of their own army, trampling on all who tried to resist them. The son of Porus fell mortally wounded in a gallant but vain attempt to stay the confusion, and Porus himself with 34,000 men and his entire camp were captured by Alexander.

Porus, still wearing his splendid armour and carrying his sword, was brought into the conqueror's presence, and Alexander's first question was "how he expected to be treated?"

"As a King should treat a King," was the bold reply.

Alexander, when not under the influence of the intemperance which so frequently led him to commit the wildest excesses, possessed both the generosity and statesman-like instinct of a truly great man and never failed to make of a defeated enemy a staunch and abiding friend. He immediately set Porus free and restored his kingdom to him.

Amidst great rejoicings the two sovereigns concluded a treaty of alliance and, uniting their strength, marched unopposed from the banks of the Jhelum to those of the Beas.

From the moment of his invasion of India and throughout his march, Alexander's ambition had been fired by the vivid and glowing accounts which reached him of the vastness, the wealth and the power of the great kingdom of Magadha, ruled over by the Nanda dynasty.[1] Alexander resolved to conquer this kingdom and incorporate it in his empire, and the man who for his own aims encouraged him to attempt this enterprise was Chandragupta Maurya, destined to become in due course one of the outstanding figures of ancient Indian history.

This man, the illegitimate son of one of the Magadha princes by a woman of low caste, had in early youth been exiled from Magadha. On reaching manhood he became a typical Eastern soldier of fortune, serving as a mercenary

[1] The Nanda dynasty. Mahanandin, the tenth monarch of the Saisunaga line, was assassinated about 372 B.C. by Mahapadma Nanda, his illegitimate son by a Sudra woman. The murderer usurped the throne rendered vacant by his crime, and thus in fact the Nanda dynasty which he founded was merely an offshoot of the Saisunaga.

at one moment in the army of one prince, and at another time vowing allegiance to another.

At the battle of the Hydaspes Chandragupta had fought in the capacity of a quite subordinate officer in the army of Porus, but from the moment that army was defeated he transferred his allegiance to Alexander, doubtless in the hope of being raised to a more important position in his own country under Macedonian rule.

Lured by Chandragupta's description of the kingdom of the Prasii, the Greek name for Magadha, Alexander announced his intention to lead his victorious army to the Ganges.

When forming this plan Alexander had failed to take into consideration the near approach of the season of the south-east monsoon and the probable effect it might have on the morale of his soldiers.

Almost simultaneously with the order to the troops to advance the monsoon broke loose. Depressed by the torrential rains and harassed by certain of the native tribes who attacked them in the rear, their courage gave way, and the entire army, both Greek and Persian, suddenly clamoured to be led back to their homes. Their demands became so insistent as practically to verge on a mutiny, and Alexander found himself compelled to yield to them.

The first stage of his retreat was a small town, name unknown, in the Southern Punjab, but no sooner had his army encamped there than they were violently attacked by the native tribes known as the Malli, who inhabited that zone and who resisted with all their strength any attempt on Alexander's part to cross it.

The town was finally captured, but not without most severe fighting, in the course of which Alexander's army suffered terrible losses and he himself was wounded. His army, infuriated by their sufferings, revenged themselves upon the inhabitants by putting almost all of them, irrespective of age and sex, to death.

Immediately after these events Alexander marched his army to a point near the confluence of the five rivers which give the Punjab its name and there made a prolonged halt. There he received the homage and official acknowledgement of his suzerainty from the heads of the neighbouring principalities, and upon this spot he founded the city of Alexandria (in modern times called Ucch) in which, to mark his authority, he installed a Greek satrap and garrison.

Proceeding south from Alexandria, through the province

of Sind, he followed the course of the Indus until he reached the sea. Here in the delta of the Indus he founded another city, Patala, on the site of the ancient town of Brahmanabad, which still exists under its Mohammedan name of Mansuriya.

It is necessary to mention here in connection with Alexander's intended return to Mesopotamia that during his protracted halt at Alexandria he ordered the Greek sailors, who formed part of his force, to construct a fleet of galleys.

At Patala he divided his army, sending one portion under the command of his admiral Nearchus to cruise along the shores of the Persian Gulf, whilst he led the remainder through the deserts of southern Baluchistan and Persia to Susa.

He reached Susa in the year 325 B.C., but with his army greatly depleted by the hardships and privations suffered during the terribly long march through barren country. This withdrawal in no way signified the abandonment of his plans for future conquest.

Alexander's intention undoubtedly was to invade India a second time, and on that occasion to carry his standard far beyond the confines of the Punjab. He had installed Greek garrisons and Greek colonies in Alexandria, Patala and the twin cities of Bucephalia[1] and Nikaia. The last two, which he had founded in commemoration of his victory on the Jhelum, were intended both as nuclei of Greek influence in India, and as the bases for a future Greek penetration into the heart of the country.

To assist him in the execution of this plan Alexander raised bodies of Indian mercenaries, trained by Macedonian officers, and they, together with a comparatively small number of Greek troops, garrisoned Taxila and protected his ally Omphis.

In addition to these measures Alexander had contracted treaties of alliance with Porus and other native princes who were pledged to assist him in the advance he was planning.

Alexander dies.

The meteoric career of Alexander was however brought to a sudden and unworthy close in the following year, 323 B.C., when he succumbed to an attack of fever at Babylon, due entirely to one of his frequently recurring bouts of intemperance.

Break-up of the Macedonian Empire.

The death of the Greek conqueror was promptly followed

[1] Named after his favourite charger Bucephalus, whom he rode on all his campaigns, and who had recently died.

by the dissolution of the immense empire which his military genius had conquered and which his remarkable statesmanship had succeeded in uniting. In Macedonia revolution succeeded revolution, whilst in the numerous other Greek states which had bowed to Alexander's mighty rule, the ever latent animosity broke out afresh and found vent in a terrible civil war. In Egypt the satrap Ptolemy Lagus, who had been one of Alexander's greatest generals, proclaimed his independence and shortly afterwards was crowned in Alexandria by the Egyptian priests with the Uraeus diadem of the Pharaohs, thus founding the dynasty of which Cleopatra was the last representative.

The city of Babylon was not only the capital of Alexander's Eastern Empire but also of several provinces (satrapies), which included Bactria and the whole of Alexander's Indian dominions.

Foundation of the Seleucid kingdom.

The satrap Seleucus Nicator, hitherto governor of these territories, now proclaimed himself King and, within a short time, added to his kingdom by the conquest of Syria.

On the death of Alexander most of his officers divorced their Persian wives and discarded most of the Oriental customs he had introduced into his court.

Seleucus, however, whose statesmanlike genius recognised the necessity, if his ambitious hopes were to have a chance of success, of being popular alike with his Greek, Assyrian, Bactrian and Indian subjects, retained his Persian wife and strove to be a Greek sovereign to the Greeks and an Oriental ruler over the remainder of his empire. His dream was to reunite the Empire of Alexander in the East, but, though he succeeded in establishing a dynasty to rule in Mesopotamia, Bactria and Syria, his attempts to retain Alexander's Indian conquests were frustrated by a man equal to himself both in ambition and ability.

Rise of Chandragupta Maurya.

This was no other than Chandragupta Maurya, upon whose early career we have previously briefly touched. The proud Kshatrya tribes of Northern India had from the outset resented Greek rule, though it was by no means a severe one, and this resentment had, even before the death of Alexander, not infrequently showed itself in open hostility. The recrossing of the Indus by the Macedonian armies was the signal for open revolt. The force of Indian mercenaries which Alexander had left at Taxila mutinied, killed the Greek governor and massacred the Greek portion of the garrison, while to add to the confusion the Greek satrap resident at the court of Porus connived at the

assassination of that prince, the only native sovereign who, from the time of his defeat by Alexander's armies, had been the Greek Emperor's consistently loyal ally.

The news of the death of Alexander let loose the forces of anarchy in his Indian dominions. Those tribes which had revolted joined the mutinous troops and became one great army, plundering as they swept through the country, and laying it waste. Chandragupta assumed command of this army, which, led by him, overran the kingdom, not only of Porus but of Omphis of Taxila.

Having accomplished these preliminary conquests, Chandragupta reorganised his forces and advanced towards his real objective, the great kingdom of Magadha. Ever since the day when, as an illegitimate scion of the royal house of Magadha, he had been driven forth an exile, he had cherished the ambitious plan to return as its lawful sovereign. Having failed to attain this aim as the ally of the Greeks, he now sought to achieve it by appearing as the deliverer of India from the Greek domination. Fate assisted him in his carefully laid plans.

Dhanananda, King of Magadha, a weak and incompetent ruler, was, at the moment of Chandragupta's invasion, vainly endeavouring to quell an internal rising in his country, and as a result of this the would-be usurper was able to advance almost unopposed to a point within sight of Pataliputra (now called Patna), the capital of Magadha.

It is impossible to say whether the events which followed were merely a matter of coincidence or the result of treachery by the disaffected element in the city, but all things combined to further the invader's triumphal progress. A revolution broke out in the palace in Pataliputra, and the king being murdered at the instigation of one of his ministers, a Brahmin named Chanakya, the conspirators elected Chandragupta to fill the vacant throne.

With his election to the throne (321 B.C.) Chandragupta had reached the goal of his ambition. He was not only the acknowledged ruler of Magadha but his supremacy was accepted from the Ganges to the Indus, and it was this powerful enemy with whom Seleucus Nicator found himself face to face when he in the year 306 B.C. made his attempt to reconquer the Indian dominion of Alexander.

Chandragupta, during his brief service in Alexander's army, had made a close study of the great leader's military tactics, and he now made use of his acquired knowledge in his campaign against his former superiors. He collected his

troops and, assuming a passive attitude, permitted the forces of Seleucus to cross the Indus unopposed.

From the moment, however, that, having gained a footing in the Punjab, Seleucus attempted to advance farther into the country, Chandragupta assumed the offensive and turned the whole strength of his army upon the enemy. The Greek army, though fighting with the greatest bravery, was handicapped both in point of numbers and equipment, and after suffering terrible losses was forced to retreat over the Indian frontier.

Chandragupta had proved his military worth and now set himself the task of carrying his genius into the field of statesmanship. Realising that the strengthening of the new kingdom was of far greater importance at that juncture than any attempt at pursuing his conquest into the mountains of Bactria, Chandragupta and his Brahmin minister Chanakya made a proposal to Seleucus for the conclusion of an honourable peace.

These proposals, ably negotiated, resulted in a treaty of peace satisfactory to both monarchs which, unlike most agreements concluded in those days, endured unaltered for generations.

By the terms of this treaty Chandragupta and Seleucus became close allies and were pledged to support one another against any enemy from outside.

Seleucus agreed to cede to Chandragupta all the Greek settlements which Alexander had founded in India, to install an ambassador at the court of Magadha and to strengthen further the ties of friendship by giving Chandragupta the hand of his daughter in marriage.

In exchange for all this Chandragupta agreed to present to Seleucus five hundred war elephants.

The conclusion of peace was celebrated with great rejoicings, Chandragupta returning in triumph to his capital.

Shortly afterwards the Greek bride arrived at Pataliputra, escorted to her Indian home by the newly appointed Greek ambassador, a philosopher, Megasthenes by name. The marriage was celebrated with full Oriental splendour and the festivities concluded with a great Durbar, the Sovereign of Magadha receiving the homage of the numerous minor Indian potentates and also that of the representatives of the newly ceded Greek cities, and assuming on that occasion the title of Maharajadhiraja, Emperor and Lord Paramount of India.

Chandragupta's success had surpassed even his wildest

hopes. His foreign foes had now become his allies and in the interior of the country he had no rivalry to fear.

He now concentrated all his energy and ability on bringing about an era of peace and prosperity throughout his vast empire. He reorganised the government everywhere and, even in the most remote provinces and tributary states, the strength of his remarkable personality made itself felt.

A great system of roads was created, which connected the different parts of the empire ; rest houses were set up at regular intervals, and a system of postal runners was inaugurated.

The establishment of communication between India and the outer world naturally led to very far-reaching results. The Greek influence, exercised in the light of an ally, brought about many sweeping changes.

In Pataliputra, owing to the presence of a Queen of Greek birth, Greek slave girls became the favourites in the zenanas of the nobles attached to the court ; Hindu physicians sought to acquire the methods of the Greek doctors, and it is almost entirely due to the diaries kept by the Greek ambassador Megasthenes that we have any positive knowledge of events which occurred at the court of Chandragupta.

The Hindus emerged from their self-absorbed and self-sufficing seclusion and, by entering into commercial relations with other countries, brought to these countries the advantages of their civilisation and religion. Caravans of Hindu merchants brought the rich products of Chandragupta's great empire into the dominions of his ally Seleucus, and Indian merchant ships, for the first time in the history of the world, carried Indian goods by sea to Siam, Java and the islands of the East Indian Archipelago.

Spread of Hindu civilisation to Java.

Flourishing Hindu colonies arose in Java and Indo-China, and the intelligent and receptive Malay population of the former country quickly adopted the superior civilisation and religion of the colonists.

Javanese scholars introduced new Javanese versions of the great Hindu epics, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, into their country. Javanese society was henceforth modelled upon the four-caste system of the Hindus, and thus there gradually came into being the great Hindu Javanese empire of Mojopahit which, even at the present time, centuries after the ancient empire has ceased to exist, retains its hold and exercises its influence upon the civilisation, ideals, literature and language of the Javanese people.

In spite of his eagerness to extend his influence abroad, Chandragupta did not lose sight of the necessity for ensuring the internal prosperity of his empire. A regular force of police maintained order in all the cities, a body of inspectors watched over the moral and physical health of the population, and by a singularly far-seeing decree the agricultural caste were declared immune from military service, thus safeguarding the cultivation of the country, upon which the prosperity of India up to the present day so largely depends. Chandragupta's wonderful career ended with his death[1] in the year 297 B.C., and his son Bindusara succeeded to the throne.

The first act of this sovereign was to renew the treaty of alliance with the Greeks, and for this purpose he despatched an envoy to the court of Antiochus, who had come to the throne on the death of his father Seleucus.

Bindusara, during his peaceful and uneventful reign extending over twenty-five years, proved himself a worthy successor to his father, continuing his beneficent policy both at home and abroad and leaving a prosperous and contented empire to his son Asoka.

With the accession of this sovereign, who was destined to introduce Buddhism as the dominant faith into his empire, the great Mauryan dynasty reached the zenith of its power.

The characteristics of this remarkable man and the changes effected by him in the political, social and religious institutions of ancient India are of such far-reaching importance as to necessitate being dealt with in another chapter.

[1] It is not absolutely clear that Chandragupta still occupied the throne at the time of his death. According to an ancient rock inscription at Sravana Belgola in Mysore, he abdicated in order to become a disciple of the Jain Sage Bhadra Bahu, and there are some signs which point to the probability of this version being correct.

CHAPTER III

THE BUDDHIST CONSTANTINE

Prince Asoka was known to his future subjects as a remarkable personality for some time previous to his accession to the throne. Already at a tender age his grandfather Chandragupta had discovered signs of coming greatness in him. During the whole of the reign of his father, Bindusara, he held high office, being appointed by him in turn Viceroy of Taxila and of Malwa ; and it was during his viceroyalty of the latter province that the news reached him of his father's death and of his own accession to the imperial throne.

This accession, however, unlike that of Bindusara, was not altogether undisputed.

The unavoidable delay in assuming the supreme power, caused by Asoka's absence from Pataliputra at the moment of his father's death, gave one of his brothers, Susima by name, the wished-for opportunity to dispute his claim, and it was not until the year 269 B.C. that Asoka found the throne of his ancestors assured to him, and that he was publicly crowned Emperor of India.

Chandragupta's reign had been essentially that of the warrior, the empire-builder and the statesman, and compared to his father's wonderful achievements, Bindusara's reign had not shown any very outstanding features.

With the accession of Asoka came the influence of the thinker, the religious and social reformer and the would-be benefactor not only of his own subjects, but of mankind in general.

The magnificent empire, built up by his grandfather by the weight of the sword, owed the extension of its boundaries still farther, and its moral influence all over India, to the greatness of Asoka's own personality, strengthened by the

great faith of Buddhism, with which his name will ever be linked.

To Asoka the divine right of kings, a belief which he shared in common with most Eastern monarchs, brought obligations of the highest moral character, and it was but natural that to a man of such ideals the teachings of the Buddha and his doctrine of equality for all human beings should make a strong appeal.

The Buddhist faith had attracted many adherents in Magadha during the lifetime of Buddha, and the then reigning Saisunaga King, the great Bimbisara, had been one of the royal converts.

This sovereign was murdered by his son Ajatasatru, at the instigation of the Buddha's most bitter enemy, his cousin and ex-disciple Devadatta, and the subsequent repentance and conversion of the parricide constitute one of the most famous episodes in the early history of Buddhism.

Chandragupta and Bindusara, though adhering to the orthodox Hindu faith themselves, showed tolerance and protection for the new faith, which they looked upon as a sub-sect of Hinduism, and during their rule the Hindu temple and the Buddhist monastery were permitted to exist peacefully side by side.

The early years of Asoka's reign seem to have been spent in a manner typical of most Hindu monarchs of his time. His court at Pataliputra was famous for its magnificence. Festivals and banquets were varied with triumphal progresses by the Emperor to the different provinces of his empire, on which occasion he would be accompanied by a huge retinue of nobles, soldiers and slave girls and all the other attendants of an Eastern potentate of those days.

It was not until the year 261 B.C. that the event occurred which marks the turning-point in the career of Asoka—the Kalinga campaign.

Chandragupta had, in spite of his wonderful gifts as an army leader, not succeeded in conquering the kingdom of Kalinga, a powerful state situated between the Mahanadi and Godavari rivers, which maintained its independence until Asoka invaded it with his thoroughly trained army and splendid organisation.

Though fighting with great heroism to the last, the Kalinga troops were completely overwhelmed by the superior forces of the Indian Emperor, who captured 150,000 prisoners, hundreds of elephants and innumerable other

spoils of war—this resulting in the entire territory of Kalinga being annexed by the Magadha Empire.

Asoka's sweeping success, however, far from filling him with joyous exultation, brought about an extraordinary revulsion of feeling, and he became the victim of intense and lasting remorse. The inevitable devastation wrought in the conquered territory by the passage of a great army, the misery of the inhabitants, the wailing of the women and children, all combined to produce an ineffaceable impression of horror upon the naturally sensitive mind of the Emperor.

The depth of this impression and the self-reproach resulting from it can be realised at the present day by the perusal of the famous series of Rock Edicts, known as the Kalinga Edicts, which Asoka caused to be engraven on the rocks in the conquered territories and in which he laid down his regulations for the form of government he desired to come into force.

The following edict, addressed to his subjects generally, may be here quoted as showing Asoka's great desire to efface the horrors of war by openly confessing his resolve to avoid it for all time.

The Chiefest Conquest,[1] he declares, is that won by the law of Piety, and he begs his descendants to rid themselves of the popular notion that conquest by arms is the duty of Kings; and, even (Rock Edict XIII.) if they should find themselves engaged in warfare, he reminds them that they might still find pleasure in patience and gentleness, and should regard as the only true conquest that which is effected through the law of Piety, or Duty.

Conversion of Asoka to Buddhism.

The formal acceptance of the doctrines of the Buddha by the Emperor coincides with the intense remorse which the sufferings of the victims of the war called forth in his soul. His actual conversion appears to have been brought about by the direct influence of a celebrated Buddhist divine named Upagupta, and resulted in a complete change in Asoka's mode of life and in the lines upon which the imperial court was conducted.

Hitherto great hunting expeditions through the different provinces of the empire, followed by luxurious banquets and other festivities, had been the custom of his court. In the year 259 B.C. Asoka abolished the imperial hunt by issuing a decree denouncing it as being contrary to the command of Buddha to take the life either of man or beast.

He followed this edict up by others, in which he very

[1] See Vincent Smith, *Early History of India*, chap. vi. p. 157.

severely restricted the slaughter of animals for human food, even amongst the Hindu section of his subjects. At the same time he erected veterinary hospitals all over the country, even as far as the independent allied kingdoms of the South, some of which, maintained by the Jain sect, are still in use at the present day.

In the year 249 B.C. and in the twenty-first year of his reign, accompanied by his religious preceptor Upagupta and his daughter Charumati, Asoka undertook a prolonged pilgrimage to the principal Buddhist shrines in India.

Kapilavastu, the home of Buddha's youth and the scene of his short married life ; Buddh Gaya, the spot where he " attained enlightenment " ; Sarnath, where he preached his first sermon to the people ; and Kusinagara, where he died, were all visited in turn by the imperial pilgrims, and the Emperor, in commemoration of his pilgrimage, erected the great temple of Buddh Gaya at Uruvela which exists to-day and is almost the only one in India which still remains in Buddhist hands.

Ten years later Asoka took the momentous decision of summoning the third Buddhist Council, a step which spread his fame far beyond the confines of the Indian Empire.

It is necessary to mention here that, immediately after the death of the Buddha, a council of 500 of his disciples met in a vast cave temple near Rajagriha and performed the ceremony of chanting the principal tenets of their departed master. A century later a second council composed of 700 teachers of the Law was held at Vaisali to settle various points upon which the faithful could not quite agree.

Asoka, at Pataliputra, summoned a third great council numbering 1000 members of the Sangha, which included the abbots of most of the leading monasteries in Magadha. This council was inaugurated by the solemn ordination of Asoka as a monk, and was followed by the publication of a series of imperial decrees, which were destined to affect the spiritual life of millions of men, by spreading the teachings of the Buddha far beyond the limits of India, and thus assuring to Asoka an immortal name amongst the great ones of the earth.

Henceforth Buddhism became the State religion, and the Emperor was constituted Defender of the Faith, but Hinduism and all other beliefs were given tolerance throughout the empire.

The teachings of Buddha in the Sanskrit tongue, in which they were originally taken down, were accessible only to the

educated classes and totally unintelligible to the greater part of the population. The Emperor and the Council now decreed that they should be translated into the Magadhi dialect and compiled in the three Pitakas, or Baskets, which to this day constitute the Sacred Canon of the Buddhists of Burma, Ceylon, Siam and Indo-China.

It was Asoka's ambition not only to uphold Buddhism in his own dominions but also to spread its teachings amongst foreign countries. He created a State department presided over by a minister styled the Dharma Mahamatra, or Minister of Justice and Religion, whose duty it was to keep the faith unsullied and to organise the forces of Buddhist proselytism both in India itself and abroad. This minister and those working under him despatched Buddhist missionaries to different parts of India to teach the Great Reformer's word to the people.

Asoka devoted his closest attention to the poorest classes and especially to the non-Aryan aboriginal tribes, thereby following the example of the Buddha himself.

These missions were accompanied by monks skilled in medicine who were to minister to those who were suffering in health, and lay brothers drawn from the agricultural castes were included so that the populations might be instructed how to cultivate the land. Roads were cut and properly constructed through the wildest parts of the country ; plantations of trees grew up to shelter travellers from the heat of the sun, whilst in every important centre hospitals for the sick were established.

Through the instruction imparted to them by the agriculturist lay brethren, the half-savage tribesmen learnt the means to earn an honest livelihood instead of subsisting, as hitherto, upon the proceeds of raids made upon their more civilised Aryan neighbours. Finally Buddhist nuns improved the lot of the totally uneducated female portion of the tribes by teaching them the blessings of cleanliness in the care of their children and in their houses generally.

Asoka's desire to make known the teachings of Buddha was unlimited. It was his dream to carry these teachings far beyond India and, to this end, a number of religious embassies, headed by eminent Buddhist divines, were despatched north, south, east and west by land and by sea. The instructions issued to these envoys furnish perhaps the most convincing proof of the greatness and breadth of mind of Asoka, and of his sincere desire to be a benefactor to mankind in general. He decrees that " The missionaries are

to intermingle among all unbelievers for the spread of religion ; they shall mix equally with soldiers, Brahmins and beggars, with the dreaded and with the despised, both within the kingdom and in foreign countries, teaching better things ". Conversion is, however, to be purely by persuasion, never by the sword, and all religions are to be treated with tolerance and respect. (Rock Edict V.)

Asoka despatched missions to the court of Antiochus Theos, the grandson of Seleucus, with whom the alliance concluded by Chandragupta was still fully maintained ; to Ptolemy Philadelphus, King of Egypt ; to Macedonia and to Epirus.

The embassies to Macedonia and to Epirus undoubtedly were the first ever sent to Europe by an Indian sovereign.

Asoka failed in his efforts to introduce the creed of Buddha into Egypt, or to supersede the deities of ancient Greece in Macedonia and Epirus, but in India itself and Ceylon he achieved results far in excess of his dreams.

Not only in his own dominions but in the most remote parts of Southern India (ruled over by the three great Hindu dynasties, the Pandyas of Madura, the Cholas of Tanjore and the Cheras of Mysore and the Far South), Buddhism made many converts amongst the Dravidian aboriginal races, who, more adaptable than the northern aborigines, had fully absorbed the Hindu civilisation.

In Southern India Buddhism found a smaller scope for its activities, as the Jain sect, founded by the great teacher Mahavira, a contemporary of the Buddha whose teachings in some respects strongly resembled his own, already exercised considerable influence there.

It was in Ceylon that the ecclesiastical envoys of Asoka achieved their biggest triumph. The first mission to Ceylon was composed of four monks headed by Prince Mahendra, the half-brother of the Emperor. This mission was closely followed by a second led by Prince Mahendra's sister, the Princess Sanghamitra, at the head of a procession of Buddhist nuns carrying two sacred relics, the collar-bone of the Buddha and a cutting from the Sacred Bo Tree of Buddh Gaya.

Mahendra and his fellow-missionaries were received with the highest honour by the reigning King of Ceylon, Dewanampiya Tissa, and, having presented letters from Asoka and the customary ceremonial gifts from their sovereign to the Sinhalese monarch, Mahendra was invited to preach publicly the doctrines of the Buddha before the ruler and the entire court.

Mahendra's eloquence produced an overwhelming impression. The Sinhalese King and 6000 of his court accepted Buddhism, and within a few years the example of the sovereign was followed by the entire population of the island.

Buddhism to-day is practically a vanished creed in India, the land of its birth, but Ceylon holds steadfastly to the faith, a monument to Mahendra, the St. Augustine of Buddhism.

Some of the richest soil in Ceylon was handed over to the monks to build monasteries upon, and amongst these figures most prominently a splendid dagoba or shrine erected over the Bone of the Buddha. The cutting from the Sacred Tree of Gaya was planted with great ceremony in Sinhalese ground, where it flourishes up to the present day and is visited annually by thousands of pilgrims.

King Dewanampiya Tissa of Ceylon, hitherto an independent sovereign, having embraced the Buddhist faith, declared his allegiance to Asoka and was recrowned in the most solemn manner in the presence of the ambassadors of the Indian Emperor, who thus became the suzerain of Ceylon.

A year after the Council of Pataliputra two Buddhist monks landed in Burma to commence the work of conversion in that country, which was not only destined soon after to become a stronghold of Buddhism, but is perhaps of all Eastern countries the one in which the faith of Buddha is even at the present time the most representative of the original teachings of Buddha himself.

The following years mark the most glorious of Asoka's reign. He ruled either directly or indirectly over the whole of India, with the exception of the independent kingdoms of the Far South.

The King of the great Dravidian kingdom of the Andhras, situated between the Kistna and Godavari rivers, acknowledged him as his overlord, as did also the ruler of Nepal, which formed part of the Mauryan Empire in the Himalayas, whilst in the North, the whole of Afghanistan, Kashmir and the region of the Hindu Kush acknowledged Asoka their supreme head.

At that time the whole of this vast empire enjoyed the incalculable blessings of peace and security; in fact, although, like a wise ruler, Asoka continued to maintain, as a measure of defence only, the thoroughly efficient army and navy created by Chandragupta, the Kalinga campaign was the only occasion during his long reign when these forces were engaged in actual warfare.

The friendly relations of the Emperor extended to the

powerful Hindu kingdoms of the South. It was in Tanjore, the Chola King's capital, that the Emperor's brother, or son—there seems an element of doubt as to the exact relationship—Mahendra, some time previous to his departure on his historic mission to Ceylon, had founded a monastery over which he had presided as abbot.

There is very little doubt that the dominating factor in Asoka's peaceful administration of his vast empire, and the reason for his success in substituting Buddhism for Hinduism, was the tolerance which he showed for all other beliefs.

In the twelfth of the famous fourteen great *Rock Edicts*, the Emperor directs his representatives and his subjects alike[1] to speak no evil of their neighbours' faiths and to remember that all forms of religion alike aim at the attainment of self-control and purity of mind and are thus in agreement about essentials, however much they may differ in externals; the Brahmin priests, though no longer as powerful as of old, were permitted to celebrate their religious rites in perfect freedom, with the sole exception of the sacrifice of animals at the Altar of Siva, the Destroyer, this being in direct opposition to the Buddhist principles.

In spite of its changed nature from the worldliness of Chandragupta and Bindusara's time, Asoka's court equalled or possibly exceeded theirs in Oriental splendour. The Emperor realised to the full his duties as monarch as well as those of monk, and knew that to the Oriental mind, magnificence is inseparable from kingship. He also, in common with all Indian monarchs, was a polygamist, and these facts have produced doubts in the minds of some historians as to his true position as a member of the Sangha. Those who cast these doubts upon the sincerity of the Emperor fail to realise that in the ancient Sangha, as in the modern Burmese and Sinhalese Monastic Orders, the vow was binding only so long as the devotee felt that he could in all sincerity keep it and that at any time the monk was free to doff the yellow robe and return to worldly pleasures.

There is little doubt that Asoka's main purpose in accepting ordination was to be in a position to assert himself as Supreme Head of the Buddhist Church, but there are indications that he did during certain periods of his reign go into retreat in one of the innumerable monasteries he had founded.

During his entire reign, and quite especially after the Council of Pataliputra, Asoka maintained a personal control

[1] Vincent Smith, *Early History of India*, p. 178.

over the Church. The large body of censors who, under the supervision of the Dharma Mahamatra, watched over the purity of monastic life as well as over that of the community in general, were compelled to report constantly to the Emperor himself, and even the mode of existence of members of the imperial family was subject to this control. Of the consorts of Asoka, two bore the title of Queen, Asandhimitra, known as the first Queen, who was his devoted helper in his great efforts for the advancement of the Buddhist faith; and Karuvaki, the second Queen, the mother of his favourite son Tivara.

The name of this Queen has been handed down to posterity in the famous *Queen's Edict*, engraved by Asoka on a pillar at Allahabad. In this edict, he records her numerous charitable gifts, and emphasises that all officials throughout the empire are to regard them as her own personal acts as distinct from his own and as steps taken by her on " the Path of Merit " taught by the Buddha.

After the death of Queen Asandhimitra and towards the end of his own life, Asoka married the Princess Tishyarakshita, a young woman who was gifted with great beauty, but who is represented both in history and in legend as having been immoral in character and the Emperor's evil genius.

Amongst many unworthy actions, this Queen is supposed to have endeavoured to destroy the Sacred Bo Tree, in revenge for Asoka's constant visits to the Shrine of Gaya, which she considered a slight to herself.

The Emperor died in the year 232 B.C., having reigned for thirty-seven years, during which time he had brought India to an undreamt-of height of glory and prosperity and had raised Buddhism, which previous to his reign had been merely represented by a local Indian sect, to one of the great religions of the world.

His splendid capital of Pataliputra and the countless monasteries or *viharas* have vanished from the face of the earth, and all that now remains of the past glory of Mauryan India are the temple of Buddh Gaya, the magnificent stupas of Sanchi and Sarnath and the great series of Rock Edicts.

By the Buddhists of Ceylon, Burma and Siam, however, who still follow " the Little Vehicle " of the Council of Pataliputra, the name of Asoka will be ever revered as that of a great monarch and saintly personage. Almost immediately after his death the Mauryan Empire began to decline and the forces of disorder, held in check by his wise and strong rule, began to rise afresh.

Asoka was apparently not succeeded by any of his sons, but by two of his grandsons, Dasaratha and Samprati, who took the fatal step of dividing the empire and constituting themselves rulers, Samprati over the Western Provinces and Dasaratha over the Eastern. This division undoubtedly hastened the downfall of their dynasty.

Asoka's two grandsons were succeeded by a number of weak and inefficient rulers, the last and weakest of whom, Brihadratha Maurya, was, in the year 188 B.C., murdered whilst reviewing his army by his commander-in-chief, Pushyamitra Sunga, who immediately after usurped the throne.

Thus fell the great dynasty of the Mauryas, the first imperial house of India, which was succeeded by a new royal line, that of the Sungas.

CHAPTER IV

THE HINDU REVIVAL

The accession to power of the Sunga dynasty marks a new phase in the history of India.

Under Pushyamitra Sunga, the founder of the new imperial house, all the original Hindu customs were revived. He himself had all the characteristics of an Oriental monarch of a certain type and was a man of boundless ambition, coupled with great military genius. Deeply imbued with the thirst for conquest, he lacked utterly the constructive genius so conspicuous a feature in the character of the great Chandragupta, whose military successes were merely means for the consolidation of his vast and prosperous empire.

Pushyamitra returned to the haughty methods of the pre-Buddhist Hindu kings and showed consideration only to the Brahmin priests, the Kshatrya nobles, and the high castes generally, entirely neglecting the humble subjects of his empire.

Even previous to the final collapse of the Maurya dynasty the great tributary kingdom of the Andhras and the state of Kalinga had both proclaimed their independence.

We may therefore conclude that when Pushyamitra came to the throne his dominions were confined to the territories stretching between Magadha and the Narbada, and thus, though still very considerable in extent, they were small as compared to the magnificent heritage which Asoka had bequeathed to his very inferior descendants.

Events in Bactria and Persia.

It is now necessary to revert to events which had occurred some time previous to Pushyamitra's reign, beyond the Indian border in the hitherto closely allied empire of the Seleucids. Antiochus Theos, the drunken, dissolute grandson of the great Seleucus, had, in spite of arrogating to

himself the dignity of a god and insisting upon divine honours being paid both to himself and to his consort Laodice, forfeited the respect of his subjects, thereby weakening the unity of the Seleucid Empire.

The results of his misgovernment showed themselves even previous to his death in 246 B.C. The Parthians under the leadership of Arsakes, and the Greek and Hellenised native inhabitants of Bactria, led by Diodotus, revolted almost simultaneously, and Diodotus, hitherto Governor of Bactria, proclaimed himself King of that province.

The Parthian rising led to the founding of the vast empire of the Arsakids, which was destined to last for nearly five hundred years, whilst an independent Bactrian kingdom was created as a result of the Bactrian revolt.

These two movements were not without effect upon the further course of Indian history.

The dynasty founded by Diodotus came to an end in 230 B.C. with the death of his son Diodotus II., and the Bactrian throne was then usurped by a Greek adventurer named Euthydemos.

Euthydemos, who appears to have been a highly gifted soldier and statesman, found his position challenged from the commencement by Antiochus the Great, King of Syria. The Bactrian army, led by Euthydemos, was opposed by the superior forces of Antiochus and was obliged to retreat into the interior of the city of Bactra, which was immediately besieged by the enemy.

After successfully resisting all attempts by the Syrian army to take the city by assault, Euthydemos sent a letter to Antiochus threatening, if he refused to withdraw his troops, to call in the assistance of the nomad native tribes, a measure which would undoubtedly have resulted in the complete extinction of Hellenic civilisation in Bactria.

Impressed by this threat, and realising the hardships to his army from the protracted military operations, Antiochus replied in a conciliatory spirit and with proposals for the conclusion of an honourable peace.

Euthydemos, in selecting his son Demetrius as peace envoy to the Seleucid camp, made a choice most singularly fortunate in its results. A youth of attractive personality and a brave soldier, he won favour not only with the King himself but also with his daughter Laodice, to whom he very soon became betrothed. The marriage was duly solemnised and shortly afterwards a treaty of alliance was entered into between the two monarchs, in which Antiochus agreed to

recognise the complete independence of the Bactrian kingdom.

In 190 B.C. the able Demetrius succeeded to his father's throne, and it is not unnatural that this ambitious and enthusiastic youth should conceive the plan of pursuing his conquests into the northern parts of India.

Very shortly after his accession, Demetrius led his army across the Indian frontier and during his victorious progress conquered Kabul, the Punjab and Sind, and succeeded in forming of these territories a compact and united kingdom.

At Sakala in the Punjab, now called Sialkot, which Demetrius named Euthydemia in memory of his father, he established his court and, assuming the title of King of the Indians, practically made India his permanent residence.

As so frequently proved to be the case, the prolonged absence of the King from Bactria caused widespread discontent in his country, and eventually in the year 175 B.C. led to a revolt instigated by an important Bactrian noble, named Eucratides, who usurped the throne.

Had Eucratides been satisfied to rule over Bactria it is probable that Demetrius would have been content to retain his Indian territory only, but Eucratides desired to carry his conquest as far as Demetrius had, and thus between the years of 175–156 B.C. these two Greek princes engaged in a war with varying fortunes, which, however, eventually brought complete victory to the arms of Eucratides, who, following the lines of his predecessor, united under his sceptre both Bactria and Demetrius' Indian kingdom.

Having installed a competent government in the conquered territories of India, Eucratides started on his return journey to Bactria, in the course of which his triumphant career was brought to a tragic conclusion by his assassination at the hands of his son Apollodotus.

The parricide immediately ascended the Indian throne of his father, whilst his brother, Heliocles by name, made himself King of Bactria. Neither of these kingdoms was destined to be of long duration. They were eventually split up into a considerable number of petty states, whose rulers belonged either to the dynasty of Eucratides or to the older royal line of Demetrius.

Prominent amongst the descendants of the dynasty of Eucratides was the striking figure of Menander, King of Kabul and the Punjab. Completely Hellenic by birth and civilisation, this ruler possessed to a remarkable degree the gift of endearing himself to his Asiatic subjects and when

he finally accepted Buddhism, the religion of the great majority of his people, his popularity was permanently assured.

His conversion to Buddhism has been immortalised in the " Milinda-panha " or " Questions of Milinda ", one of the oldest and most celebrated Buddhist theological works, and Milinda Raja, Menander's native name and title, is still famous to-day in every Buddhist country from Ceylon to Tibet.

This was the man who, in the year 155 B.C., attempted to constitute himself supreme ruler in India, and it was this powerful personality that Pushyamitra Sunga was called upon to face after usurping the throne of the Mauryas.

The exact strength of Menander's army is unknown, but it was obviously a very formidable one, and with it he forced the passage of the Beas, which had proved an insuperable obstacle to Alexander nearly two hundred years earlier.

Having effected this crossing, Menander formed his army into three divisions. Of these divisions, one was sent into Rajputana with the order to besiege Madhyamika, an important town in the interior of the country, a second was despatched probably by way of the Punjab, to carry out the conquest of Sind and of the province of Surashtra or Kathiawar, whilst the main body, most probably under the personal command of Menander, marched towards the Ganges to endeavour to deal the vital blow at Pataliputra, the capital of the Sunga empire.

The delta of the Indus, the entire rich province of Surashtra and the sacred city of Mathura on the Jumna all fell to the victorious army of the Greeks, whose triumphant progress far exceeded the furthest point conquered by the legions of Alexander.

The advance guard of the invading army arrived almost within sight of Pataliputra, and there is every probability that Menander would have been entirely successful and have wrested the imperial throne from the Sunga dynasty had not a threatened attack by one of his Greek rival princes, upon his territory in Afghanistan, in the year 153 B.C. forced him to march the greater part of his army back to Central Asia.

From that moment the tide began to turn in favour of the Indians : Pushyamitra Sunga succeeded in driving the Greek army from the heart of his empire, though there are indications that, for some years subsequent to these events, Greek troops continued to occupy some of the districts of

the western coast, and that a Greek viceroy represented Menander in the government of the peninsula of Surashtra.

Pushyamitra's prestige was still further enhanced by a victory which had been won by his son the Crown Prince Agnimitra, Viceroy of Central India, over the Raja of Vidharba or Berar, who had declared war on the Sunga dynasty.

Pushyamitra thought the moment ripe to assume formally the imperial dignity—by the celebration of the ancient rite, known as the "Asvamedha" or Horse Sacrifice.

In the far distant mythological past, Yudhisthira the hero Emperor of the Mahabharata, had by the performance of this rite declared himself Lord Paramount of India, and, as we may frequently refer to it in the course of these pages, it may not be out of place briefly to describe it here.

A highly bred horse, which, in addition, had to have certain natural markings, and which had been solemnly consecrated, was let loose to wander at its free will. It was followed by a small armed force, which was constituted its guard, and which was led either by the aspirant to the throne in person or by a near relation. The ruler of any country which the horse entered during its wanderings and into which, as a matter of course, its guard followed, was obliged either to submit unresistingly or to fight the invader. The latter, if victorious, assumed the imperial title, after which he returned in state to his own capital and sacrified the horse to the gods.

The sacred horse set free by Pushyamitra Sunga was followed by a force of a hundred men under the command of his grandson the youthful Prince Vasumitra, son of the Crown Prince.

On the banks of the river Sindhu, the boundary between Rajputana and the province of Bundelkhand, this small force encountered a cavalry squadron of Yavanas or foreigners, probably part of the division sent by Menander into Rajputana. The defeat which this squadron suffered at the hands of Prince Vasumitra's men, is best described in a letter addressed by Pushyamitra to his son, the Crown Prince, expressing his exultation at his grandson's victory—which has been preserved through the ages.

"May it be well with Thee",[1] from the sacrificial enclosure the Commander-in-Chief Pushyamitra sends this message to his son Agnimitra, affectionately embracing him.

"Be it known unto thee that I, having been consecrated for the Rajasuya sacrifice, let loose free from all check or

[1] See Vincent Smith, *Early History of India*, chap. viii. p. 201.

curb a horse, which was to be brought back after a year, appointing Vasumitra as its defender, girt with a guard of a hundred Rajputs.

" This very horse wandering on the south banks of the Sindhu was claimed by a cavalry squadron of the Yavanas.

" Then there was a fierce struggle between the two forces.

" Then Vasumitra the mighty bowman having overcome his foes, rescued by force my excellent horse, which they were endeavouring to carry off. Accordingly I will now sacrifice having had my horse brought back to me by my grandson, even as Ansumat brought back the horse to Sagara, therefore, you must dismiss anger from your mind and without delay come with my daughters-in-law to behold the sacrifice."

The despatch of this letter was promptly followed by the Horse Sacrifice, performed by Pushyamitra in the presence of the members of his family and numerous tributary princes.

This ceremony, which was carried out on a scale of great magnificence, marks a very important turning-point in the religious history of India.

Pushyamitra and his successors were orthodox Hindus, and, by adopting the Horse Sacrifice, which was so entirely contrary to the dictates of Buddha, they started the reaction in favour of Hinduism. From that moment onwards this reaction continued with varying force throughout the centuries, ending with the destruction of the last of the Buddhist monasteries in India at the hands of the early Moslem invaders.

In place of the tolerance and respect towards Buddhism shown by Chandragupta and Bindusara, Pushyamitra, for the first time in its history, subjected that faith to violent persecution. The Buddhist monasteries of Magadha were looted and burnt to the ground by the imperial troops, the monks were put to the sword, and the fierce rites of Siva the Destroyer reigned supreme in place of the gentle teaching of the Buddha.

Many of the monks, whose viharas had been destroyed, sought refuge in the territories of other and more tolerant rulers, and it is more than likely that the rapid progress made by the Buddhist Menander was in part, at any rate, due to passive assistance from the Buddhist elements in the population, who must have looked upon him in the light of a deliverer from their Hindu oppressor.

Pushyamitra died in 149 B.C. at a great age. An able soldier and a strong ruler, he lacked the greatness of his predecessor Chandragupta, who even in the midst of his conquests was always deeply concerned for the welfare of his subjects.

He was succeeded by his son Prince Agnimitra, whose reign was but a brief one.

At his death, his brother Vasujyeshtha came to the throne, who after a reign of seven years was succeeded by Vasumitra, the youthful hero of Pushyamitra's Horse Sacrifice.

At his death four kings succeeded each other in the comparatively brief period of seventeen years, and, though we have no very authentic record of their reigns, it seems more than likely that palace revolutions of the typical Eastern kind may have been responsible for these frequent changes in rulership.

One of these monarchs, Sumitra, younger brother and successor of Vasumitra, was a devotee of the stage, spending hours listening to the performance of Sanskrit plays to the negect of affairs of state, and preferring the companionship of the actors of the palace to the society of the Rajput nobles of his court.

Roused to anger by Sumitra's passion for the stage, certain of the disaffected nobles plotted against him, and the unfortunate monarch was murdered while witnessing a performance in the theatre of the palace. His assassin, apparently one of his ministers, a Brahmin named Mitradeva, to use the graphic language of the chronicler of those times, severed his head with a scimitar as a " lotus is shorn from its stalk ".

With the accession of the ninth king, Bhagavata, the power of the Sungas seems to have temporarily revived, for he reigned for the comparatively lengthy period of thirty-two years, but the tenth sovereign of the line, Devabhuti, proved to be the last, the dynasty coming to a sudden and violent end during his reign.

Weak and dissolute in character, Devabhuti neglected the duties of state, spending the greater part of his time within the walls of his zenana in company of the palace nautch girls.

One of his ministers, a strong and able Brahmin named Vasudeva Kanva, gradually gathered the reins of government into his hands and determined to usurp the throne. A beautiful slave girl in his employ was selected to carry

out his sinister intentions. She succeeded in gaining admittance to the royal sleeping apartment and stabbed the last of the Sungas to the heart. At a given signal the armed adherents of the Kanva seized the palace and proclaimed him King. The Kanva dynasty was, however, destined to enjoy, for the brief period of forty-five years only, the throne which had come to them by treachery and murder.

A new kingdom had arisen in Eastern India, that of the Andhras, destined to become in the future one of the most powerful in the peninsula.

Rise of the Andhra dynasty.

Originally a protected kingdom of the empire of Asoka, as I have previously mentioned, after the death of that monarch, the Andhras, Dravidian by race, threw off the Mauryan yoke and proclaimed their independence. A chieftain named Simuka was the first leader of this revolt, and Krishna, his successor to the throne, extended his kingdom right across the continent of India from the Bay of Bengal almost as far as the Arabian Sea, including in his dominions the sacred city of Nasik which, up to the present day, represents one of the greatest centres of Hindu pilgrimage.

In the year 28 B.C. the reigning Andhra king determined to add the conquest of Magadha, so long associated with the imperial title, to his empire. The fourth and last of the Kanva kings, Susarman, was quite powerless to maintain himself when faced by this powerful opponent, and was slain by the hand of the Andhra king.

The conquest of Magadha was complete, and the ancient city of Pataliputra passed into the hands of the Dravidians. But for events in Central Asia there is very little doubt that the power of the Andhras would have been equal, in fact might have surpassed, that of the Mauryas at its zenith.

A grave danger threatened the integrity of the empire, however, from the mountains of Afghanistan and the snowy passes of the Hindu Kush, where a mighty force of Barbarian horsemen were gathering with the intention of sweeping over India. This vast horde of wild Tartar tribes from Central Asia eventually succeeded, as we shall see, in raising one of the greatest Indian Empires, that of the Kushans.

CHAPTER V

THE KUSHAN CONQUERORS AND THE GREAT VEHICLE

A BATTLE fought in the heart of Central Asia between two obscure nomadic Tartar tribes, the Sakas and the Yueh-chi, about 150 B.C., was the starting-point of the Barbarian tempest which was to sweep over India.

The Sakas, although defeated, were not broken in this battle, but the victors compelled them to hand over their ancestral grazing grounds and to retreat southwards.

Continuing their wanderings, they eventually, about 127 B.C., came into conflict with the empire of the Parthian Arsakids, then ruled over by Phraates II.

Undeterred by the great superiority in numbers and equipment as also in the organisation of the Parthian troops, the Sakas forced them to combat, and completely routed them, Phraates himself falling upon the field of battle.

Continuing their sweeping advance, the Tartar hordes at length crossed the river Oxus and invaded Bactria. They overthrew the Greek king Heliocles, and, his kingdom passing into their hands, Hellenic civilisation suffered complete extinction to the north of the Hindu Kush.

The greatest number of the Sakas now settled in Bactria, but considerable bands of them moved still further south, penetrated into India, and occupied the cities of Taxila and Mathura.

From the fact that the chiefs of this invading party and their descendants, in the course of time, ruled over their Indian territory under the title of satrap, it must be assumed that shortly after their arrival in those parts they became the vassals of the Parthian King of Kings.

The entry of the Sakas into Bactria was followed by a much more powerful invasion, that of their former opponents the Yueh-chi, who, having been defeated by a rival tribe, the

Hiung-nu, were forced to yield up to the victors the lands they had conquered from the Sakas.

The entire Yueh-chi tribe, including the women and children to the number of half a million souls, then moved southwards, covering practically the same ground as the Sakas had done.

Those who know something of the life of the nomads of Central Asia may be able to picture to some extent this vast migration, to imagine the formidable numbers of armed horsemen on their shaggy Mongolian ponies; the lumbering Bactrian camels carrying, some the wives and daughters of the chiefs, others the large felt yurts or tents; and lastly, bringing up the rear, a crowd of those fierce, half-wild dogs, which always haunt a nomad encampment.

Thus, sometimes fighting their way, at others forcing a weaker Tartar tribe into submission, the Yueh-chi continued their progress until they reached the valley of the Oxus, which had been the goal of the Sakas before them. They appear to have pitched their tents to the north of the river, and to have lost no time in forming an alliance with their former enemies, the Sakas.

As is so frequently noted in the history of nomadic people, the Yueh-chi very soon commenced to adopt the methods of a settled life, and Sogdiana to the north of the Oxus and Bactria to the south became the seats of Yueh-chi principalities.

The year A.D. 15 saw a further stage of development, when these principalities were united into one kingdom under the rule of the chief of the Kushan section of the tribe, Kozulokadphises.

A born soldier, gifted with great ability, Kadphises I. promptly moulded the naturally warlike Yueh-chi into a formidable military machine, and started upon a campaign of conquest in the neighbouring countries.

Kushan conquest of Kashmir and Afghanistan.

Kashmir, Kafiristan and the whole of Afghanistan were conquered, but, by his treatment of Afghanistan, the Tartar leader proved that he was as well versed in the methods of peaceful penetration as in those of war.

On arriving in Kabul, Kadphises found the throne occupied by the Greek Prince Hermæus, and the means by which he primarily overshadowed and finally superseded this monarch are strikingly illustrated by the coins of the early Kushan period, which English archæologists have in recent years discovered on different sites in Northern India.

The first coins of Kadphises show the head of the Greek

king and are inscribed with the names of both sovereigns, clearly indicating that they ruled Kabul jointly.

The second series, while still showing the head of Hermæus, bears the name of the Kushan sovereign only.

A third series exists, which has the name of Kadphises engraved upon its coins, but the head is that of Augustus, the founder of the mighty Roman Empire, who, by compelling the Parthians to yield without resistance the eagles captured from Crassus, had produced a deep impression even upon the fierce tribes of Central Asia.

A fourth and last issue of coins bears the name of Kadphises, and shows on one side a Bactrian camel, and on the other an Indian sacred bull, thus representing the Bactrian and Indian dominions of the Yueh-chi, and marking the extinction of Greek rule, though not yet entirely of Hellenic civilisation, in Central Asia.

Kadphises I. died in the year A.D. 45 at the age of eighty, and was succeeded by his son Wimakadphises, or Kadphises II. Under this monarch's rule the Kushan dominions were further extended into India proper, and included within their boundaries the Punjab and a large part of the valley of the Ganges, with Benares, the spiritual capital of the Hindus. A military viceroy was in each case appointed to govern the conquered Indian provinces.

The great gifts of Kadphises II. were by no means devoted solely to a warlike policy. The indirect connection with Rome, first indicated by the coinage of Kadphises I., was developed into something more tangible by the far-seeing genius of his successor. Greco-Roman merchants from Alexandria and the Oriental provinces of the Roman Empire, began to trade in the silks and other products of India, and Kadphises II. introduced throughout his dominions a gold coinage modelled on that of Augustus and Tiberius. Kadphises II. died after a successful reign extending over a period of approximately thirty-three years.

The year A.D. 78 is most generally accepted as the year during which the third and greatest monarch of the Kushan dynasty, Kanishka, whose fame as a soldier, statesman and religious reformer was to become known from Benares to China, and whose ambassadors were to be received with full honours in the palace of the Cæsars, ascended the throne. Kanishka was not the son of Kadphises II. His father was presumed to be Vajheshpa Kushan, another prince of the Yueh-chi royal house, whose exact relationship to the previous monarchs is not clearly shown.

The new sovereign clearly revealed his ambitions by immediately assuming the Indian title of Maharajadhiraja or Emperor, and inaugurating a new era and calendar, dating from the year of his accession, which he named the Saka or Scythian Era.

Kanishka proclaimed Emperor of India.

Kanishka's ambitions were by no means limited to India. He determined to make a bid for supremacy in Eastern Turkestan in spite of the fact that in attempting this conquest he incurred the hostility of China, then the greatest power in Eastern Asia.

Previous to these events, in the year A.D. 73 the famous Chinese general Pan-chao had conquered the three Turki kingdoms of Khotan, Kashgar and Yarkand, and their rulers were compelled to accept the suzerainty of his monarch, the Eastern Han Emperor, whose boundaries adjoined those of Kanishka.

It was to General Pan-chao that the Kushan sovereign, in the year 90, sent an envoy to demand for himself the hand of a princess of the Chinese imperial house in marriage.

In spite of his great rise to power, Kanishka remained in the eyes of the Chinese Emperor an " Outer Barbarian ", and taking into consideration that even in modern times the ambassadors of the great European Powers had some difficulty in penetrating beyond the hall of audience in the forbidden city in Peking in which the tributary princes of Mongolia were received, the reply which Pan-chao was deputed to give to the Yueh-chi ruler is not difficult to imagine.

Kanishka's envoy was immediately placed under arrest and sent back to his own country.

Kanishka, though in all probability expecting this reply to his demand, treated it as a hostile act and saw in it a welcome pretext for war.

A force of 70,000 Yueh-chi cavalry, splendidly equipped and under the leadership of the Viceroy Si, one of Kanishka's highest and most trusted officers, advanced over the Pamirs by way of the Tashkurgan Pass, their object being to invade the dependencies in Turkestan, recently conquered by the Chinese, and add them to the Kushan empire.

In planning this campaign, Kanishka had, however, underestimated the military resources of his opponent, as also the terrible nature of the country to be traversed by his army. The Yueh-chi horsemen, trained as they were to the severest hardships, collapsed during the terrible advance over the snowbound, 14,000-feet-high Tashkurgan

Pass. When finally, weakened and demoralised, they reached the plain of Kashgar, the army of Pan-chao awaited them in full strength, and, as a matter of course, defeated them in their first engagement.

Kanishka had to bow his head to the storm, and was compelled to accept the terms dictated by Pan-chao, amongst others to agree to pay tribute to the Chinese Emperor. He did this, but with the mental resolve merely to bide his time until a more favourable moment should occur for him to attempt again the execution of his ambitious plans.

Though Kanishka had suffered a severe check in Central Asia, his authority in Afghanistan and India was in no way threatened by it. He made Purushapura, now called Peshawar, the chief city of the province, known in ancient days as Gandhara, the capital of his empire, and from this important strategic centre he conducted the government of his vast dominions, which extended from the Pamirs to the Vindhyas.

In Malwa the Saka satrap Chastana, a vassal of Kanishka, ruled Central India from his capital at Ujjain, while Southern Rajputana, the Mahratta country and the peninsula of Surashtra constituted the dominions of a chief of Persian or Parthian extraction, named Nahapana, who also bore the title of satrap, and was likewise a vassal of the Yueh-chi sovereign.

The seat of his government was the sacred city of Nasik. It is more than likely that Kanishka's Indian empire would have equalled in size that of Asoka, but for the fact that his progress to the south was prevented by the existence of the great Hindu dynasty referred to in the previous chapter, the Andhras of Telingana, who were at that moment attaining the zenith of their power.

Orthodox Hindus by religion, though also giving protection to the Buddhist faith, the Andhra kings constituted themselves the champions of Hindu national and spiritual ideals, as also of the Hindu caste system, in opposition to the Kushan, Saka, Parthian and other rulers of foreign origin, who, though showing a certain degree of reverence for the gods of Hindustan, were as foreigners outside the pale of caste.

Thus there existed during the whole of the period with which we are dealing two imperial dynasties in India, the foreign one of the Kushans, and the entirely native one of the Andhras.

Most of the minor rulers, both foreign and native, paid tribute to one or other of the two paramount Powers.

In the extreme south beyond the Deccan, the three great Hindu kingdoms of the Pandyas, Cholas and Cheras retained their entire independence.

Magadha, including Pataliputra, the old centre of imperial power, apparently formed part of the dominions of the Andhra kings, the seat of whose court, however, remained their original capital, Shri Kakulam on the Godavari river.

Pataliputra still retained an important position from a traditional point of view.

In the hope of diminishing the prestige of his rivals the Andhras, Kanishka, about the year A.D. 100, determined to capture the former capital, and was entirely successful in this operation which, from the military point of view, was scarcely more than an extremely daring raid.

Its moral effect upon the career of Kanishka, however, was as great as the Kalinga campaign had been for Asoka, and, as in the case of the Mauryan emperor, had a vast and abiding effect upon the future of Buddhism.

Under the broad-minded and tolerant rule of the Andhra kings, Buddhism in Magadha had entirely recovered from the persecution it had endured at the hands of Pushyamitra Sunga. The destroyed monasteries had risen from their ashes more splendid than before, and Pataliputra, though no longer the capital of the empire, remained one of the mightiest seats of Buddhist learning in India.

Foremost amongst the many celebrated teachers of the Law of Buddha in Pataliputra, was a sage named Asvaghosha, who was looked upon by all Buddhists as a saint.

Kanishka, who shared the desire of many other rulers of barbarian origin to make their capitals great centres of civilisation and of learning, felt that this object would be easy of attainment if Asvaghosha could be induced to take up his residence in Purushapura. To achieve this he demanded that the person of the saint should form part of the war indemnity which he was to receive as the price of his withdrawal from Magadha. Having gained his point, he immediately carried Asvaghosha in his suite to Purushapura.

Hitherto the Kushan emperors had been singularly unbiassed in their professions of belief, and had paid reverence impartially both to the original Scythian deities worshipped by the Yueh-chi in their nomadic days and to Vishnu, Siva and the gods of India.

Under the influence of Asvaghosha, Kanishka plunged deeply into the teachings of the Buddha, and becoming con-

vinced of their truth announced publicly his conversion to Buddhism.

In studying Buddhism, Kanishka naturally became closely acquainted with the spiritual side of Asoka's reign, and from the moment of his conversion he determined to follow the lead of his great Mauryan predecessor in all matters appertaining to religion.

In the year A.D. 100 he, with the approval of his religious preceptor Parswa, summoned a Buddhist Council on the lines of that of Pataliputra.

Five hundred eminent Buddhist abbots attended this Council, which took place at the monastery of Kundalavana in Kashmir, and which was the fourth and last of the great Buddhist Councils. It was presided over by a celebrated sage named Vasumitra, and Asvaghosha, who had been instrumental in bringing this meeting about, was its vice-president.

The assembly was opened with great ceremony by the monarch in person, and the members immediately set to work to examine and, where necessary, to revise the Pitakas or three Divisions of the Buddhist Canon, drawn up by Asoka and his Council in the year 239 B.C.

The labours of the Council of Kundalavana resulted in the drawing up of three large Commentaries on the Pitakas, of which the most important, known as "Mahavibhasha Sastra", was the personal work of the President of the Council, Vasumitra.

Although Kanishka's Council does not appear to have attempted proselytism in non-Buddhist countries by sending out missions, the effects of its labours were as far-reaching and profound as though it had done so.

At this period Buddhism had already lost some of its pristine simplicity, a result undoubtedly of the influence of revived Hinduism, Zoroastrian and Greek ideals; and possibly even of the early Christian teachings brought by St. Thomas to the court of the Indo-Parthian king Gondophares.

The fourth Buddhist Council still further accentuated this deviation from the original teachings of the Buddha. Buddhism changed from a moral code to a religion, and in so doing it invested the Buddha, originally a human being who had risen above the temptations of mankind, with the dignity of a God.

The Bodhisattvas[1] or future Buddhas were entirely

[1] The Tibetans believe one of the Bodhisattvas Avalokitesvara "the Spirit of Infinite Mercy", to be incarnate in their ruler the Dalai-Lama.

contrary to the doctrines of Buddha, and filled the same place in relation to Gautama as did Karttikeya the god of War, Ganesh the elephant-headed god of Wisdom, and the minor gods of the Hindu Pantheon, to the Trimurti: Brahma, Vishnu and Siva.

Siam and Burma, the countries originally brought into the Buddhist fold by Asoka, remained steadfast adherents to the older and purer faith, but in the centuries that followed, the newer school gained millions of converts in China, Japan, Mongolia and Tibet, where, up to that time, Buddhism had been unknown.

Thus there came into being the second or Northern school of Buddhism, basing its doctrines on the commentaries drafted by the Council of Kanishka, just as the adherents to the Southern school took theirs from the decrees promulgated by Asoka.

The doctrines of the fourth Council were ultimately divided into two branches, the Canon of the Chinese Buddhists, and the Kah-gyur or Tibetan Canon, which constitute jointly the Mahayana or "Great Vehicle", the supreme Law of the Northern Buddhists, as distinct from the Hinayana or "Little Vehicle", the original Canon of Asoka.

Kanishka thus is to the Northern Buddhism what the Mauryan emperor is to the Southern school.

Kanishka, in declaring the Council as closed, announced his intention (in imitation of Asoka) of presenting the beautiful valley of Kashmir and its revenues to the Buddhist Church, and then returned in state to Purushapura.

In his capital, he built a magnificent monastery to commemorate his conversion, and added to it a great relic tower thirteen stories high, entirely constructed of carved wood. In this relic tower he enshrined two sacred relics, consisting of two small bones of Buddha enclosed in a casket of gold.

The monastery and tower existed for many centuries, but were finally razed to the ground by the fanatic Moslem soldiers of Mahmud of Ghazni who, however, did not discover the casket containing the relics.

This casket, no larger than a small powder-box, remained secure in its hiding-place throughout the centuries, during which Moslems, Hindus, French, British and Mahratta troops fought for supremacy in India, until in the twentieth century an American Professor,[1] working for a Christian Emperor of India, came upon the relics at last.

[1] Professor Spooner of the Arch. Survey of India in 1909.

To-day they repose once more in a Buddhist land, in the great Arakan Pagoda in Mandalay, objects of reverence to millions of pilgrims.

The year A.D. 100 was not only made famous by the establishment of Northern Buddhism, but also by the fact that it saw the first official contact between the Imperial Governments of India and of Rome.

The Emperor Trajan, the adopted son of the Emperor Nerva, whom he had succeeded in the previous year upon the throne of the Cæsars, had just returned from the Danube, and had made his state entry into Rome.

Kanishka despatched an envoy to the Roman Emperor's court, bearing the customary gifts sent by Oriental rulers to a monarch on the occasion of his accession.

Trajan received the envoy of the Kushan Emperor with every manifestation of cordiality, and it is probable that the bonds of friendship between the two monarchs were further strengthened after the temporary Roman conquest of Mesopotamia in the year A.D. 116.

Although Kanishka was now firmly established upon his throne and had almost reached the zenith of his fame, and in spite of the fact that his vast dominions were enjoying the blessings of peace, he still could not, even after the lapse of so many years, reconcile himself to accept as final the defeat he had received at the hands of Pan-chao, and which obliged him to pay tribute to the Chinese Emperor.

Pan-chao had passed away, and soldiers of less outstanding military genius were now acting as Wardens of the Marches of the Eastern Han Empire.

Kanishka in A.D. 103 thought the moment propitious for the renewal of his attempt to conquer Chinese Turkestan. He brought his army in safety over the terrible passes of the Taghdumbash Pamir, an almost unbelievable feat, and, having done so, he immediately attacked the forces of the Chinese Emperor, this time with complete success.

The terms of peace included the complete subjugation of the three tributary kingdoms of Kashgar, Yarkand and Khotan, and compelled the Chinese Emperor to yield the suzerainty over them to Kanishka.

In addition to these terms, the entire independence of the Kushan monarchy was to be recognised by China, and a fourth tributary kingdom, the name of which is unknown, whilst being allowed to remain under Chinese suzerainty, was compelled to send hostages to the court of Purushapura as sureties of good behaviour.

Kanishka's reign terminated in the year A.D. 123; the exact nature of his death is unknown. According to an old Buddhist legend, some of his subjects, being weary of war, and fearing that the Emperor might be contemplating further conquest, smothered him with his quilt as he lay ill in bed, but there is no proof absolute of there being any truth in this story.

Kanishka's great gifts as a ruler rivalled in many ways those of Asoka, and his conversion to Buddhism earned for him the name of the Asoka of the Northern Buddhists. Yet in spite of these similarities the human aspect of his character fell very far short of that of the Mauryan Emperor.

According to his own lights, Kanishka was a devout Buddhist, but uppermost in his mind there always remained the old Tartar love of conquest, and, this being so, he lacked completely the intense horror of being instrumental in causing human suffering, which had been such an outstanding feature in Asoka.

In religious matters, Kanishka appears to have shown tolerance to all beliefs which existed throughout his cosmopolitan empire. Figures of the Buddha and of Indian, Zoroastrian and Scythian gods figure impartially upon his coins, and representatives of every race and creed in his dominions were admitted to his service on terms of equality.

The chief engineer of his great Vihara at Purushapura was a Greek, whose name, Agesilaos, survives to the present day.

As a result, most probably, of his connection with Rome, Kanishka, in addition to his Indian title of Maharajadhiraja, invested himself with that of Kaisarasa or Cæsar; further proofs of Greek and Roman influence are furnished by the sculptures of the Gandhara School, recently discovered in India.

It is believed that Kanishka had two sons, Vasishka and Huvishka, who are supposed to have acted successively as his viceroys at Mathura, which city, apparently, took the place of second capital.

Vasishka predeceased his father, and it was Huvishka who succeeded him on the throne, which he occupied until his death in A.D. 140, during which time he maintained unimpaired the integrity of the empire.

Huvishka was succeeded by his son, who bore the Indian name of Vasudeva, one of the names of the god Vishnu; this sovereign's character and mentality showed no trace of his Tartar descent, and were completely Indian in every

detail; even his coinage was engraved with the effigy of Siva the Destroyer.

It is a frequently recurrent fact throughout history that when a barbarian race of conquerors has adopted the superior civilisation of the conquered, it has lost its own vitality, and this was also the ultimate fate of the Kushan dynasty in India.

During the long reign of Vasudeva, A.D. 140–178, the greatness of the Kushan empire began gradually to decline, and, even previous to his death, some of the more southerly provinces of his Indian dominions succeeded in freeing themselves from his rule.

His death, which was followed by the reigns of several incompetent and weak rulers, was the signal for a more rapid dissolution of the vast empire.

In Kabul and Gandhara, however, Kushan sovereigns of the line of Kanishka continued to reign until the fifth century.

In India the Kushan empire became finally extinct in the year 226, and the fall of this empire, curiously enough, coincided with that of the great rival Hindu dynasty of the Andhras, details of which are unknown to the historians, and with the overthrow by Ardishir, son of the Zoroastrian priest Pabak, the founder of the great native Persian house of the Sassanians, of the Parthian dynasty in Persia.

The simultaneous collapse of the Kushans in the North and of the Andhras in Telingana brought about a state of anarchy in India. Between the years 226 and 308 a succession of rulers, some in the larger and others in the smaller principalities, vainly endeavoured to restore law and order and thus to gain supremacy, but it was not until the latter year that there rose to fame in the ancient capital of Pataliputra, the Man of Destiny who was to reunite the empire, and whose name of Chandragupta seemed to foreshadow future greatness.

CHAPTER VI

THE GOLDEN AGE OF HINDUISM

During the period of confusion which followed upon the fall of the Andhra dynasty the city of Pataliputra, and, it is assumed, part of the kingdom of Magadha, passed into the possession of an ancient ruling family of Tibetan extraction known as the Lichchhavis.

The original capital of this reigning house had been the city of Vaisali, north of the Ganges, already famous as the birthplace of Mahavira, the founder of the Jain sect, and also as the scene of the second Buddhist Council.

The mother of Ajatasatru, the parricide King of Magadha, was by birth a Lichchhavi princess, and the rulers of Vaisali and those of Magadha had on different occasions come into touch, sometimes as friends and sometimes as enemies.

In the year A.D. 308 the reigning Lichchhavi chief of Pataliputra desired to find a consort for his young daughter, named Kumara Devi. His choice fell upon a young chief named Chandragupta, who was the third in succession to hold the rank of a petty Raja in Magadha.

From the moment of their marriage the Princess's father seems to have handed the reins of government at Pataliputra over to his son-in-law.

During the eleven years which followed upon his assuming power, Chandragupta extended his dominions to the whole of Southern Magadha, Oudh, Tirhut and the entire Gangetic valley up to the confluence of the Ganges and the Jumna at Prayaga.[1] On February 26, 320, Chandragupta was solemnly enthroned as Emperor of India in Pataliputra.

To commemorate lastingly the supreme importance of this event, Chandragupta decreed that it should be known as the first day of the first year of a new era, styled the

[1] The modern Allahabad.

Gupta Era, and, in order to emphasise this, a new coinage was issued bearing the united names of Chandragupta and his Queen of the Lichchhavi family.

At this period Kumara Devi had borne her husband a son, whom his parents named Samudragupta, and who, from the moment of his birth, became the object of their greatest pride and affection. At an early age the boy gave promise of great qualities of mind and intellect. As soon as he attained a suitable age, Chandragupta gave his son full opportunities to join with himself in the government of the empire, thus doing all in his power to fit him for the great destiny awaiting him.

Officially an orthodox Hindu, and above all a devotee of Vishnu the Preserver, Chandragupta also fully appreciated the greatness of Buddha and the faith of which he had been the founder, and it was his desire that his son should have a close personal knowledge of both the great creeds which existed in his future empire.

He therefore invited to his court the Buddhist author Vasubandhu, one of the most celebrated men of his day, and requested him to instruct Samudragupta in the Buddhist scriptures.

Vasubandhu made the young Crown Prince fully acquainted both with the original Hinayana and the later Mahayana Schools of Buddhism.

Samudragupta received his instruction in the Vedas, the Sacred Books of his own Hindu creed, and also his knowledge of the great Sanskrit epics from the most learned Brahmin pandits, and thus, when on the death of his father in the year 330 he succeeded to the throne, he was probably one of the most accomplished princes of his time.

Ties of the very closest affection existed between the Emperor and his Buddhist teacher, and apparently one of Samudragupta's first acts upon coming to the throne, was to appoint Vasubandhu one of his ministers.

The appointment of a Buddhist minister, whose doctrines were as a matter of course so violently opposed to bloodshed, seems in direct contradiction to the career of military aggression, upon which the new Emperor embarked almost from the moment of his accession.

An eminent English historian [1] maintains that Samudragupta acted on the principle " that kingdom taking is the business of kings ", but there are many indications that

[1] Vincent Smith.

other and more personal motives influenced the second Gupta emperor in undertaking his various campaigns.

The reign of Chandragupta I.[1] had not been of sufficient length to allow him entirely to rescue India from the chaos into which she had been plunged by the fall of the strong Kushan and Andhra dynasties. Northern India still possessed many potential centres of disturbance, whose rulers looked with jealous eyes upon the new Imperial Power which had sprung up with such suddenness.

It is more than probable that, in undertaking his two great military campaigns to the North and the South, Samudragupta was actuated by the conviction that peace and prosperity for India could only be lastingly assured by a federation of all the States under the authority of one strong paramount power.

The detailed results of the Northern campaign cannot be exactly given, but it is known that between the years 330 and 336, Samudragupta led his armies from victory to victory. Nine kings of the Gangetic Valley and of Central India surrendered to his rule, and, at the conclusion of the campaign, his empire included practically the whole of North-western and a considerable part of Central India.

Foremost amongst the many kingdoms which the Emperor conquered was the very ancient one Narwar, famous as the scene of the celebrated Sanskrit romance of Nala and Damayanti.

For the eleven years following upon the Emperor's return to Pataliputra, all his great organising genius appears to have been devoted to consolidating the newly acquired territories. By the year 347, he had finally accomplished this task, and it was then that he decided to embark upon a venture, never previously attempted by any Indian ruler, native or foreign, that of the subjugation of the powerful independent Dravidian kingdoms of the Far South.

Before dealing with this campaign, it is necessary to touch briefly upon the history of the Tamil-speaking countries of Southern India.

Aryan penetration to the South.

The first mention of contact between the Aryan people of the North of India and the Dravidian races of the South is to be found in the semi-mythical account of the campaign of Rama against Ravana of Ceylon in the Ramayana.

It seems more than likely that the warrior king of Kosala really existed, and that Hanuman, the monkey hero, the faithful bearer of Rama's signet ring to the captive, Sita,

[1] As distinguished from Chandragupta Maurya.

was in reality the chief of a Dravidian tribe which had entered into an alliance with the Aryan king.

There is no record of any Aryan invasion of a hostile nature into any part of Southern India, but Aryan colonists, most probably Brahmins, undoubtedly settled at a very early period in the various parts of the Carnatic and Malabar.

The Tamils, however, unlike the Bhils, Minas and other aboriginal races of the North, already possessed a distinct and high civilisation of their own, and it was thus quite impossible for the Brahmin settlers to force upon them their authority, their civilisation, or, in the strict meaning of the word, their religion. The Brahmins, realising this, endeavoured to gain influence by the more subtle method of persuading the Tamils of an affinity between their respective creeds.

Kottavai, the " Victorious Goddess ", chief of the demons worshipped by the dominant people of the South, was incorporated in the Hindu Pantheon under the name of Durga, wife of Siva the Destroyer ; the minor spirits whom they reverenced being likewise absorbed under different names.

The Brahmins desisted from compelling the Tamils to abandon the Vatteletu, the ancient Tamil alphabet, in favour of the Sanskrit alphabet of the North, while there was no very rigid insistence even upon the caste system, so as to conciliate and eventually to win over to Hinduism the independent spirited Southern people.

The " Three Kingdoms "

Thus in the South, Tamil culture and literature flourished and attained a high degree of development in the three great Tamil kingdoms of Pandya, Chola and Chera, supposed to have been founded by three brothers, whose existence is somewhat legendary, but who are believed to have hailed from the ancient seaport of Korkai on the Carnatic coast.

Each of these three kingdoms possessed a formidable army and navy, in particular the Pandya kingdom, which had felt itself to be sufficiently powerful to despatch an embassy to Rome in the year 20 B.C. to treat with the Emperor Augustus on terms of equality.

The Pandya armies in the year A.D. 155 invaded Ceylon and captured Anuradhapura, the Sinhalese capital.

In Southern as in Northern and Central India there existed, in addition to the peaceful population of these districts, a number of fierce predatory tribes who lived by war and pillage. Prominent amongst these were the Pallavas, whose chiefs, at a period believed to be approximately

about A.D. 226, succeeded in acquiring an undefined but nevertheless indisputable suzerainty over the rulers of the three original kingdoms.

Rise of the Pallava kings.

The Pallava kings established their capital in the holy city of Conjeeveram, one of the seven most important sacred cities of the Hindus. From this centre they dominated the entire South, and as Vishnugopa, who was the reigning Pallava at the time of Samudragupta's rule in the North, could, in addition to his own resources, rely upon being supported by the military and naval forces of the Pandya, Chola and Chera kingdoms, the task which confronted the Northern sovereign was one of considerable difficulty.

Samudragupta advancing southwards from Pataliputra first invaded the kingdom of South Kosala in the valley of the Mahanadi river and compelled the king, Mahendra by name, to acknowledge him as overlord.

After this preliminary success the Emperor gained a complete victory over the aboriginal chiefs of the forest districts of Orissa, considered, even at the present day, one of the wildest and most primitive parts of India.

Having in the course of his progress conquered the kingdoms of Kalinga and Vengi, situated between the Godavari and Kistna rivers, and ruled over by a minor Pallava chief, Samudragupta advanced towards his real goal, the rich city of Conjeeveram.

The combined resources of the Pallava king and his allies, assisted by the brave and warlike tribesmen, were powerless to stem the progress of the invading armies, and Conjeeveram and its priceless riches passed into the hands of the victor. Vishnugopa, in order to free his country from the conquering forces, was compelled to sign the treaty of alliance which Samudragupta dictated to him.

His subjugation of the South completed, the Emperor, at the head of his army, commenced his long homeward march to Magadha by way of the Western Deccan.

In the course of his return to his own dominions, Samudragupta conquered the kingdom of Devarashtra in the Mahratta country and the state of Erandapalla, the modern Khandesh ; and, when in the year A.D. 350, he finally re-entered his capital with his victorious army after covering a distance of 2000 miles, he was unquestionably ruler over the greatest empire ever seen in India since the day of Chandragupta Maurya.

Samudragupta now devoted all his organising powers to the consolidation of his empire, and commenced by deposing

the kings in the Gangetic Valley whose kingdoms he had conquered ; in the words of his Brahmin chronicler Harishena, they were " forcibly rooted up " and their territories were governed by viceroys appointed by the Emperor.

The warlike tribes of Eastern Rajputana and of Central India were allowed to retain their own chiefs, who were, however, compelled to acknowledge Samudragupta as their overlord, while in the East, the ruler of the powerful kingdom of Samtata in the Delta of the Ganges and Brahmaputra rivers, and Kamarupa or Assam, were also his feudatories.

In the Himalayas the kings of Nepal and of Kartriputra[1] were likewise his vassals.

To make his frontiers secure in the North, Samudragupta concluded a treaty of alliance with the Kushan king, who still ruled over Gandhara and Kabul.

In the year 351 the Emperor moved his seat of government from Pataliputra to Ajodhya in North Kosala, or Oudh. This choice may have been actuated to a certain degree by the fact that the new capital was situated in a more central position, but much more so because of its intimate connections with the earliest traditions of Hindu national life.

India during the period of Asoka had been essentially Buddhist in faith and ideals, while under the Kushan emperors it had experienced a strange mingling of native and foreign influences.

The Gupta Era saw the Hindu Renaissance, the golden age of Sanskrit literature, art and civilisation.

Samudragupta was himself deeply imbued with Sanskrit lore and a talented poet and musician, and in his undoubted desire to promote this revival could not have found a better environment than Ajodhya, the capital of Rama and Sita, the scene of some of the greatest splendour of the legendary Hindu past.

Shortly after taking up his residence in Ajodhya, the Emperor performed with unprecedented magnificence the ceremony of the Horse Sacrifice in celebration of his victories and his inauguration of the new capital of his empire.

In accordance with Hindu custom hundreds of Brahmins were fed at the Emperor's expense, and, during his progress on the actual day to the place of sacrifice, heralds scattered gold medals engraved with the image of the Sacred Horse

[1] Precise position unknown.

amongst the immense throngs which had gathered to watch the pageant. It is more than probable that this moment was the proudest in Samudragupta's long and brilliant reign.

In the year 352 Samudragupta concluded his final treaty of alliance by entering into an arrangement with Siri Meghavarna, King of Ceylon, who despatched an envoy to the Imperial Court bearing presents of great value composed of all the jewels with which the island abounded. In return for these gifts, the Emperor gave him permission to build a great Sinhalese Buddhist monastery at Buddh Gaya.

The time had now come when, having achieved all political and military aims, Samudragupta could devote his exceptional intellect to the fostering of the gentler arts.

At his invitation Ajodhya became the residence of all the most brilliant Hindu scholars of the time, the Emperor himself being an accomplished poet. Samudragupta was also a talented performer on the Indian lyre, and took the greatest pleasure in participating in some of the musical gatherings for which his capital became famous.

Equally well versed in Hindu and Buddhist scripture, Samudragupta frequently presided at assemblies composed of eminent representatives of both faiths, and joined with them in friendly debate on their respective doctrines.

This great monarch died in the year 380 after a reign extending over forty-five years, during which he raised India politically to a height to which she had not attained since the days of Asoka.

His successor upon the throne was his son Chandragupta, whom, following the precedent adopted in his own case by his father, he had for many years associated with himself in the affairs of government.

The new sovereign, when ascending the throne, was styled Chandragupta II. He very soon gave evidence of greatness as a soldier, legislator and, above all, as patron of literature and art. His military fame rests upon the victories he secured in the West of India, which up to that time had remained practically independent.

Scythian dynasties of Malwa and the Deccan.

In our last chapter we mentioned that Kanishka ruled Malwa and Western India through the agency of two lines of hereditary satraps, one founded by the Saka chief Chastana at Ujjain, and another founded by a chief of Parthian extraction named Nahapana at Nasik.

After the death of Kanishka the most formidable of the Andhra kings, Gautamiputra, succeeded in conquering

the whole of the Nasik satrapy, but, during the reign of his successor, Pulumayi II., the satrap Rudradaman, the grandson of Chastana, wrested the whole of these Western territories from the Andhras and thus united both satrapies under his own rule.

This powerful foreign dynasty which ruled over the rich provinces of Malwa, Gujarat, Kutch and Surashtra, had never been genuinely loyal to Samudragupta.

The advance of Chandragupta II. and his army to the Arabian Sea constituted an unbroken line of successes. The entire territories of the Saka satrapy were annexed by the Emperor and added to his dominions.

Rudrasinha, the Saka satrap, fell by the hand of Chandragupta, but not, as might be supposed, in battle. According to an ancient Hindu chronicle, he was actually slain in his enemy's capital whilst carrying on an intrigue with a merchant's wife in her husband's house, and the wife endeavoured to help him to escape from the conqueror by disguising him in her own garments.

There may be some truth in this version, but it seems far more probable that this event took place in the Saka satrap's own capital of Ujjain, immediately after its capture, than in Ajodhya.

It is generally supposed by historians that it was after his return from Ujjain that Chandragupta took the title of Vikramaditya or Sun of Power, and there is little doubt that, when speaking of the legendary king Vikramaditya of Ujjain, who is supposed to have reigned in 57 B.C. and to have founded the Samvat Era, Chandragupta II., though his rule was a much later one, was really the monarch referred to.

Literature and Art.

In the course of the reign of Chandragupta II. the Hindu Renaissance reached the zenith of its glory, and in so doing underwent many changes. The dramatic art in particular reached its highest stage of development in the plays of Kalidasa, the Hindu Shakespeare. Kalidasa's masterpiece is the romantic play "Sakuntala", which has through the ages delighted millions in India, and which centuries later proved an inspiration to Goethe; but all the works of Kalidasa, especially the poem "Meghaduta" or "Cloud Messenger" and the play "Vikramorvasi" stand in the forefront of Hindu literature.

The play "Sakuntala" is based upon an incident in the Mahabharata, the love story and secret marriage of the Lunar Kshatrya Prince Dushyanta and the Brahmin girl Sakuntala,

the adopted daughter of the hermit Kanva. Even in its English translation it gives a most charming and vivid picture of the ideals of the ancient Hindus before the advent of Islam with its entirely alien introduction of the purdah.

Earlier in date but equally celebrated is the ten-act drama entitled "the Mrichchhakatika" or the "Little Clay Cart", said to be from the pen of one of the kings of Central India, Sudraka by name.

Amongst the famous historical plays dating from that remote period, one of the greatest is the "Mudra-Rakshasa" of Visakhadatta, the theme of which is the rise to power of Chandragupta Maurya.

Brahmin pandit, Buddhist abbot, dramatist, poet and sculptor were alike encouraged at the brilliant court of the versatile Chandragupta II. Hindu architecture began to free itself from Greco-Roman influences and to develop upon independent lines. Magnificent temples were erected in all the cities and dedicated to the Hindu gods, especially to Vishnu the Preserver as being the deity most deeply revered by the Gupta emperors, who, however, did not limit their protection to followers of the Hindu faith only.

Magadha, though it had ceased to be the centre of the empire, continued to be the Buddhist Holy Land, and at Nalanda near Gaya there existed a great Buddhist university maintained by a royal grant, which housed 10,000 monks belonging to every school of Buddhist thought, and which offered to students from all parts of India the opportunity to study Sanskrit, theology, philosophy, law, science and medicine.

At this period the vast neighbouring empire of China had adopted the Mahayana form of Buddhism, which, together with the original Confucianism and Taoism, formed the State religions of the country. The existence of Buddhism in China forged a natural link with India, further strengthened by the arrival in India in the year 405 of the Chinese Buddhist Fa-hien, the first of the Chinese pilgrims to whose writings we owe our knowledge of the condition of life in the Hindustan of those days.

Fa-hien remained in India until 411 and recorded his experiences in his *Travels*, which give a very clear picture of the advanced state of civilisation existing throughout the Gupta empire and of the admirable rule of Chandragupta II.

Whilst in China the torturing of suspected persons was commonly resorted to in the detection of crime, in India torture was in no circumstances practised; capital punish-

ment was practically unknown, and all but the most serious crimes were punished merely by fines.

The Gupta emperor, being a devotee of Vishnu the Preserver, on whose altar the offerings consisted solely of flowers and fruit, was a staunch protector of animal life, and maintained almost entirely the restrictions introduced during the Buddhist period.

Chandragupta's long reign ended with his death in 413, and he was succeeded upon the throne by his son Kumaragupta I.

Very little is known of the events which occurred during the reign of this sovereign, but the fact that he too celebrated the Horse Sacrifice seems to point to his rule having brought further territory to the Imperial dominions.

There is no evidence of the Gupta dynasty being seriously challenged until 450, five years previous to the death of Kumaragupta I., when it became gravely imperilled by the forces of a powerful state apparently of Northern India known as the Pushyamitra kingdom, which inflicted a severe defeat upon the Imperial army and advanced into the heart of the empire.

Kumaragupta, at that time a man of advanced age, was unable personally to lead his troops and the command thus devolved upon his son, Skandagupta by name, who succeeded in rallying the defeated army and endeavoured to stay the progress of the invaders. Very few details of the battle which ensued are known to historians, but the brilliant leadership of Skandagupta turned the fortunes of war and brought victory once more to the Imperial troops.

Invasions of the White Huns.

For the following five years the Gupta empire maintained its integrity, but when, on the death of his father, Skandagupta succeeded to the throne, he was immediately faced by a very grave danger, the invasion of his empire by the terrible Epthalites or White Huns.

Hitherto India, though having suffered frequent invasions, some even by races of barbarian origin such as the Kushans, had never experienced anything approaching in horror to the onslaught of these absolute savages.

Darting through the north-western passes, these wild horsemen swept over the fertile plains of Northern India, laying the country waste as they advanced. The prosperous Gangetic Valley groaned under the smoke of burning cities ; the peace-loving male inhabitants were put to death and their women carried away into slavery.

The entire civilisation which the Gupta Era had brought

to India appeared to be at stake, when Skandagupta rose to supreme height of courage and, girding on his sword, put himself at the head of his army and opposed the invaders.

So grave was the peril which threatened the empire, so terrible the ordeal through which the people of Northern India were passing, that, alike in Hindu temple and Buddhist monastery all over the country, prayers were offered for deliverance.

In the Imperial palace in Ajodhya the aged Queen, the Emperor's mother, sat surrounded by her terrified slave girls, expecting at any moment to hear the savage cries of the Huns as they approached the capital at full gallop.

Just at the tensest moment of their excitement, the sound of the hoofs of a single horse going at full speed was heard in the courtyard, and with lightning rapidity Skandagupta, his face beaming with joy, burst into his mother's apartment, to quote his own words, "Just as Krishna, having slain his enemies, betook himself to his mother Devaki",[1] with the almost unbelievable news that the barbarian hosts, defeated and utterly broken, were in full retreat, and that India was saved.

Having raised a magnificent temple as a thanksgiving to Vishnu, to whom he attributed his victory, Skandagupta immediately started to restore the ravages of the invasion, and, for the following twenty years, the empire remained free from further aggression.

The year 465, however, brought a second and even more formidable Hun invasion, led by a man who is described as "a cruel and vindictive chieftain",[2] and who succeeded in conquering Gandhara and overthrowing the Kushan king, who still ruled over this remnant of the great Kanishka's empire.

This invasion became a still more serious menace by the arrival of constant reinforcements to the Huns from Central Asia, and was attended by almost continuous victory for their arms.

It was still in progress when Skandagupta passed away in the year 480, and his successor, his brother Puragupta, who died after occupying the throne for five years only, was totally unable to prevent the invaders from overrunning the territories of the empire.

[1] From an inscription on the Column of Victory erected by Skandagupta at Bhitari, east of Benares.

[2] See Vincent Smith, *Early History of India*, chap. xii. p. 310.

When his son Narasimhagupta Baladitya ascended the throne, the vast empire had shrunk to Magadha and the Eastern Provinces, and even these comparatively small remnants were destined in the near future to be further reduced.

In 484 the Epthalite hordes inflicted a severe defeat upon the Persian King of Kings, Firoz, who was slain in battle. To add to the humiliation of the proud Sassanian dynasty, Firoz' daughter was taken prisoner and compelled to enter the harem of the Hun chief, and, from the date of that battle until the year 500, the Huns continued to pour fresh throngs of wild horsemen into the provinces of Northern India.

Defeat of the Persians by the Huns.

In this year the Hun chieftain Toramana founded an Epthalite kingdom in the Punjab, with its capital at Sakala or Sialkot, once the seat of government of the Greek king Demetrius.

Hun kingdom in the Punjab.

Toramana assumed the Imperial title of Maharajadhiraja and forced both Bhanugupta, a younger scion of the Gupta house, who ruled over Malwa, and the king of the powerful state of Valabhi in Surashtra, to pay him tribute. He died in 510 leaving his dominions to his son Mihiragula.

The accession of this monarch marked the commencement of a period of tyranny such as Northern India had never previously known. A professed devotee of Siva the Destroyer, he interpreted this deity only as a destructive force, entirely overlooking any other aspect of the Savaite doctrines, and instituted a remorseless persecution of members of the Buddhist faith. Marauding bands of Huns spread terror throughout the country, and the inhuman character of the tyrant may be judged by the fact that he took pleasure in watching herds of terrified elephants being driven over a precipice to certain death.

This reign of terror continued in India for eighteen years, and can only be compared in cruelty to the oppression exercised in Europe, much about the same period, by Mihiragula's greater compatriot Attila, "The Scourge of God".

At length in 528, a deliverer arose in the person of Yasodharman, a powerful Raja of Central India, who was assisted by a number of native princes, and whose combined forces marched against the foreign oppressor.

Indian league defeats the Huns.

The first and only encounter with the enemy took place near Mandasor in Malwa, and ranks as one of the fiercest and most decisive battles ever fought on Indian soil. The superiority of the Huns lay in the mobility of their cavalry,

that of the Indians in the strength of their heavy war chariots and army of elephants.

The battle continued all day with wavering fortunes, but, whilst the Huns were fighting to retain their conquests, the Hindus were inspired to supreme effort by the fact that all they held dear in life was at stake.

Nightfall brought entire defeat to the Hun armies, and their tyranny was finally overthrown. Mihiragula was a prisoner in the hands of the triumphant Indians. Disarmed and closely guarded, the fallen tyrant was brought to the spot where the Indian monarch was resting after the battle. Even in our time, in almost every country, outrages such as Mihiragula had committed would have made him liable to suffer the penalty of death. With the joy of victory and the knowledge of the liberation of his country, all feeling of revenge had vanished from the generous-minded Yasodharman. He received Mihiragula in his humiliation with the honours of war, restored his sword to him, and set him at liberty.

To commemorate this victory Yasodharman declared the year in which it was gained to be the commencement of a new era styled the Malava or Malwa Era after the province in which the decisive battle had been fought.

The Hun menace ceased to exist as far as India was concerned for all time, and strange though it may seem, large numbers of the tribesmen settled down peacefully in the country and became, in the course of a few generations, entirely absorbed in the Hindu population.

End of the Gupta dynasty.

There are many indications in support of the theory that their chiefs, after undergoing the prescribed rites of purification, were admitted into the proud Kshatrya caste.

The great Imperial House of Gupta, weakened by its prolonged struggle with the Huns, had come to an end shortly after the death of the last ruling Emperor, Budhagupta by name, approximately A.D. 500.

The House of Gupta occupies a unique position in the annals of Indian history, for, in spite of the fact that the Mauryas ruled over a far more extensive empire, the only outstanding personalities amongst their monarchs were Chandragupta, Bindusara and Asoka, after which the dynasty suffered a rapid and final decline.

The line which was founded by Chandragupta I. and the Lichchhavi Princess never deteriorated, and, when their dynasty at last broke up, it was entirely due to reasons quite beyond their own power to control.

All the great Gupta emperors, judged even by the highest possible standards, occupy each one of them their distinctive place in history, and were beyond doubt amongst the greatest forces which brought about the growth of Hindu civilisation and culture.

Between the fall of the Gupta empire and the year 606 there was a period, so frequent in the history of India, when no individual sovereign in any part of the North was strong enough to impose his supremacy upon his fellow-rulers.

The year 606 saw the rise of a new emperor in the old Aryan land of Brahmavarta who, great as he was, was also destined to be the last monarch of the ancient paramount dynasties of Hindu India.

CHAPTER VII

THE REIGN OF HARSHA

Those who know the great part which tradition has always played in the life of the Hindus, will readily understand that the prince who by hereditary right ruled over the land of Brahmavarta would, to the multitude, on the strength of this dignity, appear likewise to be heir to the imperial power formerly held by the Guptas. This is especially probable as the reigning Raja of Thanesar, Prabhakara-vardhana, by name, was on the maternal side himself of Gupta descent. The Huns, whilst no longer constituting a serious danger to the peace of India, still, from time to time, left their settlements in the Punjab, and attempted to carry raids into the interior of the country. To put an end to these attempts, Prabhakara-vardhana, in the year 604, despatched a punitive expedition against them.

The command of the main body of this force was entrusted by the King to his eldest son, the Crown Prince Rajya-vardhana, then nineteen years of age, while the rearguard, composed entirely of cavalry, was commanded by his second son, Prince Harsha, who, at that time, was only fifteen.

The army of the Crown Prince rapidly and successfully carried out their plan of forcing their way into the mountain passes of the North-west Frontier, thus driving the Huns from their furthermost retreat.

The youthful Prince Harsha, however, being a keen devotee of the chase and finding himself in the forests of the North-western Punjab, which abounded in game, was unable to resist the temptation of lingering in order to indulge in the pleasures of hunting, and thus neglecting the objective of the expedition.

A royal messenger despatched in hot haste from Thanesar

found him thus employed, and delivered the alarming intelligence that the King, his father, had been suddenly stricken with dangerous illness. Filled with remorse, the young Prince hastened back to the capital, arriving there just as his father breathed his last.

It is common knowledge that in the East in the event of the death of the sovereign, the absence from the capital of the next-of-kin to the throne has always paved the way to intrigue.

There were many at the court of Thanesar who, anxious to be the power behind the throne of a youthful and inexperienced monarch, urged Prince Harsha, in the absence of his elder brother, to usurp his kingdom.

Harsha, however, was entirely impervious to the suggestions put forward, being not only too clear-sighted to assume a responsibility he felt to be legally his brother's, but also because the very closest ties of affection had always existed between the two.

In order to crush any further attempts in that direction he forthwith commanded that heralds should ride through the streets of Thanesar and proclaim Rajya-vardhana King; and, when shortly afterwards a message was received from him in person announcing the complete routing of the Huns and his immediate return to the capital at the head of his army, Harsha gave instructions for his triumphal reception.

Throughout the city of Thanesar arches were erected and banners displayed, whilst, in accordance with Kshatrya custom, the women, decked in their gayest clothes, went into the streets to raise the *Suhailea*, or "Song of Joy".

After his enthusiastic acclamation by the populace, Rajya-vardhana ascended the throne of his forefathers. The festivities in connection with his coronation had only just ceased when a messenger arrived at great speed at Thanesar to inform the King that his brother-in-law, King Grahavarman Maukhari of South Magadha, the husband of his elder sister Princess Rajyasri, had been assassinated at Kanauj, on the Ganges, by his neighbour the Raja of Malwa, who had also imprisoned the Princess, in the words of the message,[1] "like a brigand's wife, with a pair of iron fetters kissing her feet".

Without a moment's hesitation Rajya-Vardhana left the capital in his brother's charge, and placing himself at

[1] See Vincent Smith, *Early History of India*, chap. xiii. p. 337.

the head of a body of 10,000 cavalry, set out to avenge his brother-in-law and to rescue his sister.

Shortly afterwards, and almost simultaneously with the news of the complete defeat of the Malwa king, the tragic intelligence reached the city of Thanesar that the young victor had been treacherously murdered by one of the beaten kings' allies, Sasanka, King of Central Bengal, whilst attending a conference to which he had sent him a friendly invitation.

The death of Rajya-vardhana was closely followed by a period of great unrest, during which, owing to the fact that there appeared to be no direct heir to the throne, intrigue and plotting by innumerable court factions, all wishing to gain for themselves the supreme power in the state, became rife.

After a time the more patriotic section of the court nobles, realising the danger of a continuance of this position of uncertainty and making an elder cousin of the late King, named Bhandi, their spokesman, offered the throne to the young Prince Harsha, whom they considered, by his previous actions, a personality sufficiently strong to assume the reins of government.

The same reluctance to ascend the throne, which he had shown on the earlier occasion, seemed, however, still uppermost in Prince Harsha's mind, he apparently considering that either Princess Rajyasri, the consort of the murdered King Grahavarman, or an infant son of King Rajya-vardhana, had precedence in the line of succession.

It was only after consulting a Buddhist Oracle, who declared in his favour, that he, in the following year, 606, agreed to assume the government, but even then only as Regent, with the title of Prince Siladitya, which signified " Sun of Virtue ".

As soon as his power was firmly established, the new ruler set forth at the head of his army to find his sister, of whose whereabouts, though she had escaped from captivity, all trace had been lost, and to avenge the murder of his brother.

At first he seemed to be doomed to be unsuccessful in both objectives. The strength of King Sasanka's army seemed greater than that of his own, and the Princess's retreat continued veiled in mystery.

After an arduous search extending over weeks through the dense forests of Central India, Harsha, assisted by some of the wild Bhil chiefs, who inhabited them, discovered his sister, who, despairing of ever being rescued, was preparing

to perform the terrible rite of *Johur* or self-immolation, which signified burning herself on a pyre with her entire retinue of slave girls. Having rescued his sister, he returned with her to the capital and resumed the task of government.

For six years, during which the Princess Rajyasri, who though young in years was possessed of great ability, assisted him with her counsel, Prince Harsha continued to hold the regency until finally, in 612, in response to the unanimous wish of the nobles of his court, he assumed the actual sovereignty, and was enthroned in state with the title, not only of Raja, but of Maharajadhiraja or Emperor.

It soon became evident that the Emperor was admirably fitted to bear so lofty a dignity. His first step was to alter the entire organisation of the army and also to substitute 5000 elephants for the heavy and cumbersome war chariots, which he condemned as useless. His force thus became a much more mobile one than that belonging to any of the other North Indian Rajas, and Harsha, in the space of five and a half years, succeeded in conquering the whole of Northern India, in subduing the greater part of Bengal, and, finally, in overthrowing his enemy Sasanka.

In the year 620, the Emperor, in his desire to add still further to the greatness of his empire, cast his eye upon the new kingdom which had arisen in the Deccan after the fall of the Gupta dynasty in 550, and which, under the leadership of a Rajput adventurer named Pulakesin Chalukya, had become a power of the first magnitude in Southern India.

The accession to the throne of that kingdom by the grandson of the founder, Pulakesin II., in 608, marked the zenith of its glory.

Even the Pallavas of Conjeeveram in the extreme south were, to a certain extent, dominated by his rule, and he had succeeded in completely subjugating the important kingdom of Vengi, situated between the Godavari and the Kistna, over which his brother Kubja Vishnu-vardhana ruled as Viceroy.

Harsha, who in the words of a contemporary chronicler, desired [1] " to bring the whole of India under one umbrella ", determined to make a great effort to overthrow this powerful sovereign and so unite north and south under his own sceptre.

With this end in view, he marched at the head of his entire army towards the Deccan, but, on the banks of the river Narbada, he was confronted by the whole military force

[1] See Vincent Smith, *Early History of India*, chap. xiii. p. 339.

of the Chalukya kingdom, commanded by Pulakesin in person. Time after time the northern army endeavoured to force a passage of the river, but the opposing forces were invulnerable and repulsed each successive attack with heavy loss to the assailants.

Harsha was at length forced to realise the hopelessness of the adventure upon which he had embarked, and expressed the wish to open peace negotiations, which eventually resulted in a treaty, which declared the Narbada as the frontier between the empires of the north and the south.

The next campaign undertaken by King Harsha was against another powerful rival, Raja Dhruvabhata, who ruled over the state of Valabhi in Western India, and who claimed descent from Rama and Sita.

This sovereign's kingdom comprised Kutch and Gujarat, in addition to the entire Surashtra peninsula. The campaign came to an end in the year 635 with the complete victory of Harsha, but though he had defeated Dhruvabhata in battle and could, as a matter of course, have annexed the entire Valabhi dominions, he refrained from doing so, and declared himself satisfied with an acknowledgement of his suzerainty by the Western monarch.

He further strengthened the bond by bestowing the hand of his daughter upon Dhruvabhata in marriage, and may have been partly actuated in seeking this alliance by the desire to unite his line with the more ancient one of Rama.

Harsha selected as his seat of government the city of Kanauj on the eastern bank of the Ganges, in the ancient kingdom of Panchala, which, in the period of the Mahabharata, was the dominion of King Drupada, the father of the heroine of that epic.

This already important town, as the capital of Harsha's vast empire, rapidly developed into one of the greatest and most magnificent cities in India. It extended for a distance of four miles along the eastern bank of the Ganges, on which stood, surrounded by beautiful gardens, the palaces of the Emperor, those of the nobles and of the wealthiest inhabitants of the city.

Due regard was also given to the spiritual needs of the vast number of inhabitants, and there existed in the capital no fewer than two hundred Hindu temples and one hundred Buddhist monasteries, in which latter 10,000 Buddhist monks were installed.

Harsha had, however, no desire to settle down to a life of luxury in his splendid capital. He was fully alive to the

great importance of making his personal authority felt in the most remote corners of his dominions, as distinct from the influence of the ministers and viceroys he had appointed.

With this end in view, it was his invariable custom each year to make extensive tours in the different provinces of his empire, and on these occasions he would not only receive the reports of his officers but also make a point of listening to any petitions from his subjects in every, even the humblest, walk of life.

At each halting-place, Harsha would take up his residence in a travelling palace, constructed of boughs and reeds, which was burnt immediately he had left it, another being erected at the next stage of his journey. It was whilst thus encamped in Bengal in the year 643 that Harsha first heard of the arrival in Assam, the ruler of which province was one of his vassals, of the celebrated Chinese Buddhist pilgrim and doctor of Buddhist law, Hiuen Tsang.

This remarkable man, then forty-three years of age, had, when still very young, won distinction as a scholar for his profound erudition and knowledge of Buddhist scripture, and had early in life come to be considered in the country of his birth as one of the ablest exponents of the Mahayana school of Buddhism.

In the year 629 he commenced his great pilgrimage with the twofold object of visiting the Buddhist holy places in India, and collecting Buddhist texts and sacred relics.

This pilgrimage included practically the entire Indian peninsula, with the exception of the extreme south, and he then temporarily took up his residence at the university city of Nalanda, situated in the heart of the Buddhist Holy Land. It was at that period that the pilgrim received a summons to appear at the court of Kumara, Raja of Kamarupa or Assam, Harsha's principal vassal in Eastern India.

Hiuen Tsang obeyed the summons and presented himself at the Raja's court ; however, he had no sooner arrived there than a command was sent from his overlord Harsha to the ruler of Assam to despatch the distinguished Chinese divine to him at his camp in Bengal.

Kumara, who though personally descended from a Kūch aborigine, represented in point of fact a far older dynasty than that of his suzerain, was roused to anger by his peremptory message, and replied to it in terms which were equally insolent, implying that under no conditions would he part with his guest.

This exchange of rather aggressive messages continued for

some little time between the two monarchs ; eventually, the Assam Raja thought better of it and appeared in person at the imperial camp, bringing the learned divine with him.

Harsha, having gained his point, extended a most gracious welcome to his vassal and to his Chinese guest, and invited them both to return with him to Kanauj, declaring his intention to hold a great religious festival in the capital in honour of the Chinese sage, in the course of which he wished him to preach in public to the court and populace.

In his description of this festival, Hiuen Tsang paints a most vivid picture of the truly imperial splendour, which was one of the outstanding features of Harsha's court on state occasions.

Whilst the festival was in progress, a temporary building of great size was erected on the banks of the Ganges, which was to represent a Buddhist monastery, the principal feature of which was a tower 100 feet high, containing a life-size image of the Buddha wrought in solid gold.

On each day of the festival, a second and smaller golden image of Gautama was carried in state to the shrine attended by the Emperor, his son-in-law the Raja of Valabhi, Kumara of Assam, and eighteen other tributary princes, 300 gorgeously caparisoned elephants bringing up the rear of the procession.

Harsha, robed as the Hindu god Chakra, held one side of the canopy which sheltered the image, and immediately behind him walked Kumara, the chief of the Eastern vassals, clad as Brahma the Creator, waving the white fly whisk, one of the emblems of royalty, over his sovereign's head.

As the procession advanced, the Emperor flung jewelled flowers, pearls and precious stones amongst the people, these gifts being emblematic of the three Jewels, otherwise Buddha, his Religion and the *Sangha*.

When the monastery was reached, Harsha bathed the image with his own hands, and carried it to the altar in the great tower, where he made solemn offerings to it, consisting of thousands of silken robes embroidered with gems.

The prolonged celebrations concluded with a great public debate between Hiuen Tsang and the most eminent Brahmin pandits on the subject of the doctrines of their respective creeds. The proceedings did not, however, end upon as harmonious a note as had been intended when they commenced.

The monastery enshrining the two images caught fire,

the flames being extinguished with great difficulty, largely owing to the personal assistance of the Emperor.

Harsha, who had directed operations from the summit of the great tower, was descending the steps, attended by his suite, when a fanatic Brahmin rushed at him and attempted to stab him.

The would-be assassin was immediately arrested, and confessed that he had been inspired to commit the crime by certain of his caste brethren, whose jealousy had been aroused by the marked favour shown by the Emperor to Buddhism and its Chinese exponent.

As a result of this confession, no less than five hundred noted Brahmin pandits were arrested, their ringleaders admitting that they had set fire to the monastery by means of burning arrows, and had intended to slay the Emperor in the ensuing confusion.

The principal conspirators suffered the extreme penalty of the law, the remaining ones being exiled for life, and Harsha issued a proclamation to all his subjects declaring that any attempt upon the life of Hiuen Tsang, or even any evil spoken of him, would meet with the direst punishment.

From Kanauj, Harsha, with his widowed sister Princess Rajyasri, the entire body of tributary princes, and lastly Hiuen Tsang, proceeded to Prayaga, the confluence of the Ganges and the Jumna, up to the present moment still one of the most sacred places in India.

It had always been Harsha's custom, after the lapse of every five years, to convoke on this holy ground a great assembly composed of representatives of every creed professed throughout his empire, and to distribute amongst them, and also amongst the poor, all the treasures of varied description which he had collected in the intervening periods.

On this particular occasion, no less than half a million of the poorest of the Emperor's subjects, many of them orphans, were present, and in addition to these the Emperor had extended his invitation also to many of the leading Brahmin pandits and Buddhist and Jain ecclesiastics, and to representatives of every ascetic order in Northern India. This assembly lasted for seventy-five days.

On the first day an image of Buddha was set up on the sands and worshipped by all present, while the Emperor laid upon the altar gifts similar in richness to those offered by him at the gathering of Kanauj.

The second and third days were devoted to the worship of Surya the Sun God, and Siva the Destroyer, while on

the fourth the sovereign bestowed gifts on ten thousand eminent members of the *Sangha*, each monk receiving a hundred gold coins, a pearl, a cotton robe, flowers and perfumes.

The remainder of the time was taken up with distributions of a similar character to the Brahmins, the members of the Jain sect, and to the ascetics from distant parts of India, as also in the bestowal of generous alms amongst the poor of all creeds.

This distribution of valuable gifts in kind and in money, on such an immensely lavish scale, left the Emperor's coffers temporarily exhausted.

Evolution of Puranic Hinduism.

The strange character of the two gatherings at Kanauj and Prayaga, the unnatural mingling of the Buddhist and Hindu faiths, the thinly veiled hatred of the Brahmins towards the followers of Gautama, all go to prove that seventh-century India was, at that time, in the throes of a great religious transition, which had its effect upon the beliefs of all, from the members of the imperial house down to the humblest Sudra.

The Emperor's sister Rajyasri, who practically shared the government with him, and whose influence over him was very great, was a devotee of the Hinayana form of Buddhism. Harsha, during the greater part of his reign, paid reverence almost impartially to Buddha, Siva and the Sun God, but after the arrival of Hiuen Tsang at his court, he began to show a special leaning towards Mahayana Buddhism, as followed in China.

For the moment Buddhism appeared to be the paramount faith, owing mainly to the Imperial patronage. Like all the Indian Buddhist sovereigns, Harsha, after his conversion, strove to follow the model of Asoka both as regards his personal conduct and in the government of his country, but he gave a startling proof of the strange inconsistencies in his character when, in the concluding paragraph of his decree re-establishing the absolute sanctity of animal life, he threatened with the penalty of instant death any human being who broke the decree.

In spite, however, of the innumerable Buddhist monasteries all over the country and of the many thousands of Buddhist pilgrims who still flocked to Buddh Gaya, Sarnath and the other holy places, Buddhism in India was in truth on the wane, the chief factor in this slowly working extinction being the increasing power of Puranic Hinduism.

The ideal of Nirvana, though it satisfied the spiritual

demands of the educated, was too remote, cold and impersonal to appeal to the masses, whose yearning was for a personal god. This yearning, fostered by the Brahmin caste, eventually brought about Hinduism as we know it to-day, tracing its source to the Sacred Books known as the "Puranas" or Ancient Writings.

There were eighteen of these books based on doctrines dating from the remotest period, which had, however, only been compiled in writing about the second century A.D. They dealt with the history of the Hindu gods, endowing them with the aspirations and passions of humanity, thus creating a mythology which appealed to educated and uneducated alike.

To the Brahmin, the love story of Krishna, declared to be the eighth incarnation of Vishnu, and of Radha, the milkmaid of Braj, was an allegory, Krishna representing the Divinity, and Radha the human soul seeking him; while to the humble peasant Krishna and Radha were real lovers, who had lived their romance on earth.

Intellectually the court of Harsha was as brilliant as that of his predecessors of the Gupta dynasty, and the Emperor himself was the author of three plays, all of some merit, one a Buddhist religious play, called "Nagananda", and the other two romantic dramas, named respectively "Priyadarsika" and "Ratnavali". Probably the most outstanding literary figure at Harsha's court was the Brahmin novelist Bana, the Emperor's closest friend, who sought to immortalise him after his death by making him the hero of an historical romance entitled "The Harsha Charita", or "The Deeds of Harsha".

Bana combined with great descriptive power a somewhat satirical sense of humour, which did not even spare the physical peculiarities of the leading figures at the imperial court. Thus in "The Harsha Charita", he describes the commander-in-chief as possessing a nose as long as his sovereign's pedigree.

Ten days after the conclusion of the festival at Prayaga, Hiuen Tsang took leave of the Emperor and started on his lengthy overland return journey to China. He refused all the rich gifts of a personal character offered to him on his departure, with the sole exception of a fur-lined cape presented to him by Kumara of Assam, but he carried back with him no less than 190 relics of the Buddha, a great number of gold and silver images of the great Teacher, and 657 ancient Sanskrit Buddhist manuscripts.

Three years later Harsha passed away, and hardly had the Emperor breathed his last, than his great empire collapsed like a house of cards.

One of his ministers, Arjuna by name, usurped the throne, but failed to hold it owing to an act of insensate folly.

In 641 Harsha had despatched a Brahmin envoy to the court of the Emperor of China, Tai-Tsung, the second sovereign of the illustrious Tang dynasty.

In recognition of this act of courtesy, the Chinese Emperor sent two missions to Harsha carrying letters and presents, the second of these missions being led by Wang-hiuen-tse, one of the most eminent Mandarins of the Chinese court.

This second mission was preparing to leave Kanauj at the moment of Harsha's death, and Arjuna's first act upon usurping the throne was to make a murderous attack upon the Chinese embassy.

The Chinese envoy's entire escort were massacred in cold blood, all gifts destined by Harsha for the Emperor of China were seized, and it was only with the greatest difficulty that the ambassador and his staff succeeded in escaping to the safe haven of Nepal.

Wang-hiuen-tse was, however, not the man to brook such an outrage to his sovereign by any other potentate.

He immediately summoned the assistance of the famous King Srong-tsan-gampo of Tibet,[1] son-in-law of the Chinese Emperor, and, with a combined army of Tibetans and Nepalese troops, invaded India.

The entire district of Tirhut, including the capital Vaisali, was overrun by the invaders, and the usurper Arjuna met his death on the field of battle almost immediately.

Harsha's passing brings the era of the ancient paramount dynasties of India to a close.

Henceforth the ruling power was to be divided amongst the great Rajput clans who, though some amongst them might allocate to themselves the Imperial title, were in truth all on a footing of equality.

[1] King Srong-tsan-gampo of Tibet had married in 639 the Nepalese Princess Bhrikuti, daughter of King Amsuvarman of Nepal, and two years later gained the hand of Princess Wen-cheng, the daughter of the Chinese Emperor. The combined influence of his two consorts converted the Tibetan monarch to Buddhism, which promptly became the state religion of Tibet, and both these ladies are deified in the Tibetan Pantheon, under the name of the Green and the White Tara.

Important though these changes were, they were not nearly so epoch-making as those which were happening in Persia and Central Asia, and which, in due course, produced a complete upheaval in Indian life.

Ancient Persian Empire overthrown by the Arabs.

In 641 at Nehavend in Persia two armies faced each other in mortal conflict, the one being backed by the power of an age-long tradition, that of Yezdegerd, the Persian King of Kings ; the other, inspired by a fierce religious zeal such as the world has seldom seen, was the Moslem army of the Khalif Omar.

In this conflict the Moslem zealots carried all before them, and the great army of the Persian King, though vastly superior both in numbers and equipment, was completely routed, and Yezdegerd, the last descendant of Ardishir, died a miserable death at the hand of one of his own subjects.

Triumph of Islam in the Middle East.

Persia, Mesopotamia and Central Asia henceforth became Moslem lands, and in ancient Persepolis the Koran took the place of the Zend Avesta.

Throughout the greater part of Asia the ancient kingdoms were falling into ruins and the old divinities were tottering on their pedestals, alike threatened by the sweeping power of Islam, which, even up to the present day, is is inclined to spread into fresh areas.

PART II

INTRODUCTION

It appears necessary before passing on to the mediæval period of Indian history to give some idea of the origin of the more important of the thirty-six royal races of Rajasthan, those celebrated Rajput dynasties and clans, which figured so conspicuously during that period. This is all the more important because many of them still rule in Rajputana at the present day.

It is most difficult to separate definite historical facts from the mass of legend which surrounds the India of the earliest days, and it will always be open to doubt whether, when the caste system first came into being at the time when the Aryans abandoned their nomadic mode of existence, the priestly caste of the Brahmins reigned as supreme over the warrior caste as it has always claimed to have done; but two facts are beyond dispute: that the Kshatrya sovereigns, from time to time, combined spiritual as well as temporal power under one sceptre; and that adoption into, and even intermarriage between the first and second of the three twice-born castes, was by no means as unknown or looked upon with so much disfavour as in later years.

These facts find illustration in the great epics—Vishvamitra, King of Gadhipura, whose desire to become a Brahmin brings him into rivalry with the Brahmin sage Vasishtha, and whose story fills a large part of the first Book of the Ramayana, at length attains his heart's desire by being adopted into the family of the saintly Brahmin Bhrigu.

The daughter of Vishvamitra, Sakuntala, the heroine of Kalidasa's play, is adopted by the Brahmin hermit, Kanva, and is married to her Kshatrya husband only by the irregular marriage of "mutual consent"; yet the child of the marriage is acknowledged by him as his heir and becomes in due course Bharata, Emperor of India.

Parasu Rama, the victorious champion of the Brahmins

in the great struggle with the Kshatryas, which finally gave the supremacy to the priestly caste, was himself of mixed parentage, his father being the Brahmin sage Jamadagni and his mother a Lunar Kshatrya princess.

Many historians, both European and Indian, hold that the original Kshatryas were practically exterminated in the war against Parasu Rama, and that neither the mediæval Rajput clans, nor their present-day representatives, are the descendants of those who fought under Yudhisthira, Krishna or Rama. They believe their origin to be traceable partly to certain of the aboriginal tribes and partly to the Kushan, Sakas, Huns and other foreign invaders of Hindustan, who, after being provided by the Brahmins with pedigrees tracing their descent from the Sun and Moon, emerged in due course as the descendants of the ancient Kshatryas.

Historians of another school dispute this view, and are convinced of the genuineness of their lineal descent from the Suryavansa and Induvansa, the children of the Sun and Moon. A very close study of the subject, assisted by the greatest historical authorities, ancient and modern, would appear to show that both these views are based upon a considerable amount of probability. We have already seen how the Huns, after the battle of Mandasor, were admitted into the Kshatrya caste, and there seems good reason to believe that the famous group of Rajput clans known as the Agnikula, who, according to the legend, were created by the Brahmin Vasishtha from a fire-pit on the summit of Mount Abu, were in truth a Scythian tribe, who were there submitted to the ceremony of purification as a preliminary to incorporation in the Kshatrya caste. When, however, the likelihood of this solution has been accepted in some cases, there still remain indications which point to the legality of the claim raised by certain of the great Rajput reigning houses to be directly descended from the original Kshatryas, both of the Solar and the Lunar lines.

In Rajputana to-day there rules one prince, the Maharana of Mewar, the deeds of whose ancestors fill a great place in Indian history, and who himself, largely as a result of his descent, is honoured above every other Hindu sovereign.

He bears the proud titles of "Hindua Suraj", Sun of the Hindus, heir of Rama and vicegerent of Siva.

All other Rajput princes, even those whose territories greatly exceed in size that of Mewar, address him as one of far loftier position, thus proving that they accept him as the descendant of the hero of the Ramayana.

Further than this, when the Maharana enters the Temple of Siva at Eklinga, the chief shrine of Mewar, he, as vice-gerent of Siva, or in Hindustani, " Ekling ca Diwan ", automatically supersedes the Brahmin high priest in the performance of the sacred rites, a relic of the far distant days when the kingly and priestly offices were frequently combined in the same person.

In regard to the Lunar Rajput dynasties and clans, there are equally good grounds for believing that the authentic history of the Bhatis of Jaisalmir, in the heart of the Indian Desert, the Jaduns of Karauli and the Jharejas of Kutch, Morvi and Nawanagar, who claim descent from the deified hero Krishna, do, in point of fact, date back to that very remote period.

My reason for making use of the expression " Rajput dynasties and clans " is in order that one should realise the true source of the intense devotion of the Rajputs to their chiefs.

To the Sesodia Rajput of Mewar, however humble his walk in life, the Maharana is not merely the ruler of his country, but also the head of his family, in the same way that every Campbell in Scotland considers himself a kinsman of the Duke of Argyll.

In the belief, to use their own phrase, that they and their chiefs are all " Sons of one Father " lies the true strength of the Rajput clans from mediæval India up to the present day.

CHAPTER I

THE SWORD OF ISLAM, A.D. 712–997

THE conditions of India on the eve of the first Moslem invasion can, to a certain extent, be compared to that of Italy in the years immediately previous to the accession to the throne of the Emperor Charles V.

No single Indian state was sufficiently powerful to force its supremacy upon the others, any more than Venice could achieve the conquest of Genoa, or Milan that of Florence.

The spiritual influence of the Papacy, however, was so great as to put an entire state under an interdict, a centralising power which India lacked, but which the Moslem, by vesting both spiritual and temporal power in the Khalifate, possessed to a remarkable degree.

In addition to this the elective Khalifate of the first successors of the Prophet had now given place to the hereditary dynasty of the Ommayads, a change which still further strengthened the unity of the Moslem empire.

The incident which brought India into touch with the Power which had overthrown the entire religious and political systems of Western and Central Asia was in itself a trivial one.

In the year 710, a small Arab trading-vessel from Basra arrived at the mouth of the Indus and was promptly seized by the local Hindu authorities. Hajjaj-ibyn-Yussuf, the celebrated Governor of Basra, immediately on receipt of the news of the outrage, sent a demand in the name of his sovereign, the Khalif Walid I., to Dahir, Prince of Sind, one of the many rulers who shared in the administration of Western India, to the effect that the confiscated ship should be immediately restored.

Dahir refused this request, for the perfectly truthful

reason that, the mouth of the Indus not forming part of his dominions, he had no power to interfere.

The Governor of Basra, who had at one time described himself to the disaffected inhabitants of Kufa as "The Reaper of a Harvest of heads", was not in a mood to display a conciliatory spirit, all the more as he was most probably anxious for a quarrel which might result in the extension to India of his master's empire.

Without further reference to the matter, he despatched a small punitive force into the dominions of the ruler of Sind, which was, however, promptly and entirely beaten by the Hindus. First Moslem invasion.

This, of course, led to hostilities on a much greater scale, Hajjaj rapidly equipping an army of approximately 6000 men, and placing them under the command of his young nephew, Mohammed-ibyn-Kasim.

This commander had orders to overthrow Dahir and his entire line, and to occupy Sind in the name of Khalif Walid.

Mohammed-ibyn-Kasim fully justified his uncle's choice. Advancing through the desert country of Makran, he reached the Indus safely in June 712, and there found his army confronted by the entire force of Sind, under the command of Dahir in person. A severe and protracted fight ensued which finally brought decisive victory to the Arabs, Dahir fighting bravely and perishing on the field.

Mohammed, whose path for the moment was open to further advance, moved on until, in due course, he reached the city of Arore, the capital of the kingdom of Sind, there to find the gates closed by order of Dahir's widow, who had assumed the regency on the death of her consort.

The widowed Queen, clad in armour, an inspiring figure, appeared on the ramparts exhorting her troops to resist to the utmost. Every attempt to storm the city having failed, Mohammed, being plentifully supplied with catapults and other engines of war, decided upon a siege.

The brave garrison faced the new ordeal unflinchingly, until, having reached the limit of their powers of endurance, they were forced to choose between the alternatives of surrender or death, and without a moment's hesitation they chose death.

The gates of Arore were thrown open, and the Amazon Queen, surrounded by her nobles and clansmen, led them in that last fierce charge, which has always remained typical of Rajput warfare.

The charge was conducted with such fury that for a

brief space the Moslems seemed to fall back, but in the end their numbers prevailed, and the heroic Queen joined her lord in the "Mansions of the Sun", practically all her supporters falling with her, and Mohammed-ibyn-Kasim, the first Moslem conqueror in India, made his triumphal entry into the city.

Within the walls of the citadel, the Arab commander counted his spoil, which comprised the entire hoarded treasure of the Kings of Sind, and of the Hindu shrines of Arore. Lastly, he came upon the most pathetic fruits of his victory, the wives, daughters and young sons of the brave defenders, who were now, for the first time in the history of their race, to taste the bitter cup of slavery.

Heading this melancholy procession, and bearing themselves with all the unconquerable dignity of the Rajputni, were the two beautiful young daughters of the Hindu monarch. Mohammed determined to send these two princesses to his sovereign, the Khalif, as ornaments for the Imperial harem at Damascus, little thinking that this action, which he hoped would raise him in the favour of his master, was actually to seal his doom.

Resolved to wreak a terrible revenge upon the author of the overwhelming tragedy which had deprived them of their parents and their country and had sent them into slavery, the princesses on being brought into the presence of the Khalif charged Mohammed Kasim with having dishonoured them.

Walid, infuriated by this charge, despatched instant orders to Sind to the effect that Mohammed should be taken alive and sewn up in a raw hide and sent to Damascus.

The messengers of death found the young general dreaming of new victories, and planning to lead his armies to the Ganges in an attack on Kanauj.

The terrible sentence was carried out to the letter, and, on arrival at Damascus, the remains of the unfortunate Mohammed were paraded before the Khalif and the two princesses, who, after giving vent to expressions of joy that their parents had been avenged, calmly confessed that the charge they had made had been entirely untrue.

In spite of the miserable end of the conqueror of Sind, the Khalifate enjoyed the fruits of his victories for many years, though this may have been due in greater part to the clever diplomacy of the Arabs, which made them seek alliance with one of the greatest of the native Hindu dynasties, the Rashtrakutas of the Deccan, who had in 753 succeeded the Chalukya house, than to their military strength and prowess.

Jointly with these powerful native allies, the Arabs waged constant if somewhat indecisive warfare against the great rival kingdom of the Rashtrakutas, that of Panchala or Kanauj, where a line of sovereigns belonging to the famous Pratihara clan of Rajputs ruled in what had formerly been Harsha's capital.

When, in the year 750, the Ommayad Khalifate gave place to that of the Abbasides, the Khalif Abbas appointed Al Mansur Viceroy of Sind, and later on, upon the death of Abbas in 754, the latter succeeded to the dignity of sovereign.

The removal of the seat of the Khalifate from Damascus to Baghdad tended to strengthen the hold of the Arabs on their Indian conquests; and to impress still further his rule upon his Indian subjects, Al Mansur altered the name of Arore, which was henceforth called Mansuriya after him.

When, however, on the death of Harun-al-Rashid in 809, the Abbassid Khalifate suffered the same fate as most of the great Oriental monarchies and began to decline; when the authority of the Commander of the Faithful grew weaker and weaker and he became a mere puppet in the hands of his Turkish mercenaries, the various outlying provinces of his vast empire began to break away from his rule.

Break-up of the Arab Empire.

The accession to the Khalifate of Al Motamid in 870 was the signal for the revolt of Egypt, where the Viceroy, Ahmed-ibyn-Tulun, inaugurated the dynasty of the Tulunids. Simultaneously, the province of Khorasan and parts of Central Asia threw off the Arab yoke. In Khorasan the throne was seized by Yakut-ibyn-Laith, originally a humble brazier of Seistan, who founded the native Persian house of the Saffarids, which line was eventually, in 903, driven out and replaced by another dynasty, that of the Sammanids.

Amongst the household of the fifth sovereign of this latter dynasty, Abdul Melek by name, was a Turki slave called Alphtegin, who won such high favour with his master that he appointed him Governor of the great province of Khorasan, a post which he retained until his sovereign's death in 961.

Rise of the dynasty of Ghazni.

His successor on the throne became suspicious of Alphtegin's loyalty, and, knowing that to arouse doubts in his master's mind was likely to bring about his doom, the Viceroy determined to seek refuge with a few devoted friends in the mountains of Afghanistan.

Here his masterful spirit gained him the allegiance of the wild mountain tribes, and he was able in due course to found the first independent Musulman kingdom of Afghanistan, called after its capital that of Ghazni.

In the history of every country it has happened that great events have sprung from small beginnings, and this is especially applicable to India, where the entire social and artistic ideals of the Hindus underwent a fundamental change through the purchase by Alphtegin of a slave named Sabuktegin from a slave-merchant of Turkestan.

The blood of kings flowed in the veins of this unknown slave, who knew himself to be a descendant of the last of the Sassanians, the unhappy Yezdegerd III.

His attractive personality and striking gifts speedily won him the favour of his master, who gradually raised him from slavery to the rank of one of his most trusted advisers and commanders.

Alphtegin died in 976 and was succeeded by his son Ishak, on whose death, after a brief reign of less than two years, the nobles unanimously elected Sabuktegin to the vacant throne.

To strengthen his position still further, he married the daughter of his first master Alphtegin, and having made his authority quite secure in the mountains of Afghanistan, he turned his mind towards the fertile plains of Hindustan.

At the period with which we are dealing, a powerful Rajput sovereign of the Chauhan clan, named Jaipal, ruled over the north-western frontiers of India, and most of the Punjab, his capital being Bhatinda, south-east of Lahore.

Second Moslem invasion of India.

In the year 986 Sabuktegin determined to attempt the conquest of this kingdom, having previous to that added to his possessions in Afghanistan by the annexation of Kandahar. Sabuktegin's first invasion of Jaipal's territories can hardly be described as more than a raid on a large scale, in the course of which he destroyed numerous Hindu shrines, erecting mosques in their places and gaining a considerable amount of booty.

Jaipal, however, had no intention of allowing this first attack to go unpunished, and two years later, placing himself at the head of his vassals, he crossed the Indus.

The opposing forces met at Lamghan, the modern Jelalabad, and, but for a sudden and violent tropical storm in the night preceding the battle, which the Hindus took to be a sign of the anger of the gods directed against them, it is more than likely that victory would have rested with the

Rajputs. Jaipal, as a result of the superstition amongst his forces, saw himself deserted by a large number, and was left to face his enemy with a greatly depleted army.

When day broke the Hindus discovered that Sabuktegin, taking advantage of the confusion in their ranks, had cut off their retreat through the passes ; any attempt at escape, therefore, being fruitless, Jaipal had no other alternative but to sue for peace.

He was allowed to withdraw to Bhatinda on promising to pay into the hands of Sabuktegin's envoys at Lahore an indemnity of a million dirhams—£25,000—and, further, to deliver to them fifty elephants.

Jaipal had, however, no sooner reached his own country in safety, than at the instigation of his Brahmin minister he repudiated the agreement entered upon, and imprisoned the Moslem envoy, thus giving Sabuktegin fresh cause for hostile action.

The result was another invasion of Indian territory by the armies of Ghazni, and this time the entire Lamghan and Peshawar districts were permanently annexed.

Peshawar district annexed to Ghazni.

This marked the inauguration of Moslem rule in those parts of Northern India, and gave it a starting-point from whence it was soon to spread to a considerable distance.

Sabuktegin died in the year 997 at the age of fifty-six, and was succeeded first by his second and legitimate son Ismail, who, however, was able to maintain himself as ruler only for a few weeks, when he was overthrown by his elder illegitimate, but far more able brother, the famous Mahmud, the " Image Breaker of Ghazni ".

Accession of Mahmud.

At the time of his accession to the throne, Mahmud was thirty years of age, and, in spite of his youth, had already held high commands in his father's campaigns. He was a man of education and of cultivated taste, as is proved by his patronage of the celebrated Persian poet Firdausi. His outstanding characteristic, however, was his fanatical devotion to his own faith and consequent loathing for all that he considered to be idolatry.

Mahmud did not crave for the rich plains of Hindustan, which had so greatly lured his father Sabuktegin ; his longing was to reach the magnificently ornate temples of the Hindu gods and to destroy the images which they enshrined, as Mohammed had destroyed the ancient idols in the Kaaba of Mecca.

Before proceeding to give the events of Mahmud's reign in detail, it is necessary to cast a glance at the considerable

political changes which had swept over India between the first Moslem invasion and the rise of the house of Ghazni.

Political changes in India.

In the year 993 a chief of the noble Tuar clan of Rajputs, named Anangpal, settled on the site of the ancient city of Indraprastha, the capital of the heroes of the Mahabharata.

The association with the glories of the past which clung to that spot, and also the fact that the Tuars traced their descent from the Pandavas, most probably caused the other rulers of Northern and Central India to acknowledge Anangpal to a certain extent as their suzerain ; and the city, which gradually grew up around the fort in which he first established himself, has from that day to this, under the name of Dihli or Delhi, remained the symbol of imperial power throughout Hindustan. Besides the monarchy of Delhi, four other kingdoms, all of the first rank, held sway in Northern India. These were : Kanauj, ruled over by the Pratihara clan of Rajputs ; the state of Sambhar in Rajputana ; that of Lahore in the Punjab, both of which last were governed by princes of the great Chauhan tribe ; and the state of Mewar, with which we shall presently deal more in detail.

The Chandel dynasty of Mahoba was undoubtedly the dominant power in the Central India of those days, and, in spite of their most probable aboriginal descent, their princes were amongst the most cultured in the country, and also amongst the most ambitious, being constantly at war with the two rival Central Indian reigning houses, the Pramara Rajputs of Malwa, and the Kalachuris of Chedi.

In Eastern India the kingdom of Bengal, ruled over by the famous and long-lived Pala dynasty (730–1119), remained the last stronghold of Buddhism in India, and the kings of Bengal continued to the end to endow *viharas*, to despatch Buddhist missionaries to foreign lands and generally to uphold the highest traditions of Asoka.

In the extreme south the three ancient royal houses—the Pandyas, Cholas and Cheras—still ruled over the territories of their ancestors.

The reigning Chola, Rajaraja the Great (985–1018), who had at the time of the accession of Mahmud to the throne of Ghazni succeeded in adding Ceylon and the Maldive and Laccadive Islands to his dominions, was to all intents and purposes Lord Paramount of Southern India.

We are now coming to the territories of Western India, viz. the Deccan, Gujarat and Surashtra, and, as these were destined to be the background of Mahmud the Image

Breaker's greatest campaign, it is necessary to trace the progress of events in that part of the peninsula from the time of the great Arab invasion of 712.

We know that after the conquest of Sind the Arabs allied themselves with the Hindu dynasty of the Deccan and fought side by side with them in their long-drawn-out wars against the Pratihara kings of Kanauj.

The Arab assistance was of little avail in Northern India, but they gained a substantial and independent victory in the west by overthrowing the powerful and ancient kingdom of Valabhi, which figured so conspicuously in the reign of Harsha.

The dynasty of the Valabhi kings dated back to the year A.D. 144, when it was founded by a prince of the house of Rama, named Kanaksen, who had emigrated from Ajodhya to Surashtra.

This success rapidly extended their authority over the whole of Surashtra and Gujarat, and their capital, Valabhipura, in due course became one of the greatest and wealthiest cities in India.

The earliest sovereigns of Valabhi were orthodox Hindus, but although every one of the later rulers remained worshippers of the Sun God, Bhal, the tutelary deity of their house, a great number of them succumbed to the teachings of the Jain sect, and it was at the Council held at Valabhipura, in the second century A.D., at which the Jain sage, Devarddhiganin, presided, that the Jain scriptures were given their definite form.

Arab conquest of Valabhi.

In the year 750 approximately this kingdom was conquered by the Arabs of Sind, who destroyed and sacked the magnificent temples and palaces of Valabhipura, and killed the reigning King Siladitya VII. in battle after a vain attempt on his part to transfer his seat of government to Gayni or Cambay.

The fall of the kingdom of Valabhi did not, however, bring to a conclusion the line of Rama, which owed its preservation to a romantic incident.

When Valabhipura fell, Siladitya's wife, Queen Pushpavati, a daughter of the Pramara Raja of Chandravati, had undertaken a pilgrimage to the shrine of Amba Bhavani Mata (or the "Universal Mother") in her native country, to invoke her blessing upon her approaching motherhood.

On receiving the terrible news of her husband's death and the disaster following upon it, the Queen sought refuge in the wild mountain district of Malia, near the shores of

the Gulf of Kutch, and it was in a cave in the mountain-side that her son was born and named by his mother, Goha, or the " Cave born ".

Immediately after the birth of her child, the Queen resolved to join her lord by sacrificing herself on a funeral pyre, but before doing so, she placed the infant under the care of a young Brahmin woman named Kamalavati, the wife of a priest of a neighbouring temple, and enjoined upon her to bring him up as a Brahmin, but, when the time came, to marry him to a Rajputni.

As the young prince grew to manhood, he tired of the peaceful life with his foster-parents, and found hunting and raiding with the wild Bhil tribesmen of the adjoining district of Idar far more to his taste.

Eventually he became the chosen chief of the Bhils, and during eight generations his descendants ruled over these primitive children of the forest.

The ninth prince, Nagadit by name, was murdered by his subjects, who were becoming weary of foreign rule, but owing to the fidelity of the descendants of the Brahmini Kamalavati, who had, ever since the days of Goha, retained their position as the family priests of the chiefs of Idar, the life of his infant son was preserved.

The boyhood of this child, Bappa by name, was spent in the humble occupation of herding cattle in the pastures of Nagda in Mewar, not far from Udaipur, the present capital, where his descendants rule as kings to-day.

This peaceful existence continued for some years, during which the young prince also received instruction in the Hindu sacred books, and became a disciple of a celebrated Brahmin sage, named Harita, who resided in a hermitage close by.

The quiet period at Nagda was brought to a sudden close by a romantic incident which led the young heir of Rama to the steps of a throne.

The local chief of Nagda, a feudal noble of the Chalukya clan, possessed a beautiful daughter, whom Bappa had frequently seen pass by in her palanquin, and with whom he had fallen deeply in love. Bappa, despite his exalted birth, dared not, in view of his humble occupation in life, approach the chief of Nagda as a suitor for his daughter's hand. He bided his time, and eventually fate came to the rescue by bringing the young princess and her escort of slave girls into the forest, to indulge in their favourite pastime of swinging.

On their arrival the princess and her party were much

concerned to find they had come unprovided with the necessary rope. Seeing Bappa and his fellow cowherds close by, the princess begged him to try and procure them one.

"Certainly, I will fetch a rope", replied Bappa, "if first you will play a game of marriage with me".

Her sense of humour roused by the suggestion, the princess complied. She allowed herself to be tied to Bappa by the scarf she wore. She and her attendants then joined hands with Bappa and his companions, and all circled slowly round an ancient mango tree the prescribed number of times, chanting the bridal mantras or hymns, as representing the ritual usual at the ceremony of marriage.

The rites being concluded, Bappa divulged his real intention in stipulating that the princess should play the game of marriage with him, and informed her that he now considered her his wedded wife.

Probably the young Rajputni, with the romantic tradition of the race from which she sprang, was won by this bold wooing, for she yielded without demur, and Bappa, having sworn both her attendant slave girls and his own fellow-herdsmen to secrecy, felt he had gained the object of his desires.

The marriage was kept entirely secret until the princess's father sent the cocoanut, the Hindu symbol of marriage, by his family bard to a neighbouring chief, thereby signifying that he wished him to marry his daughter.

Contemporary chroniclers relate that, in accordance with Hindu custom, the astrologers were requested by the chief of Nagda to fix the day on which the wedding should take place, to which they replied that no day could be fixed for the auspicious event as the prospective bride was already married.

The fury of the Chalukya chief knew no bounds, and Bappa and his bride, warned betimes, fled for their lives, accompanied only by two faithful Bhil attendants, Baleo and Dewa, to Chitor, the capital of Mewar.

Here Bappa presented himself to the reigning sovereign of Mewar, Man Singh by name, a member of the "Maurya" section of the Pramara clan of Rajputs, and begged him to employ him in some military capacity.

The fact of Bappa being doubly related to the sovereign of Mewar, first through the mother of his ancestor Goha and then through his own mother, both of whom had been Pramara princesses, coupled with the favourable impression the young Rajput produced at his court, brought about the

granting of his request, and he was forthwith enrolled as a Samant or military leader of Mewar, and was given an estate suitable to his rank in life.

The unusual favours bestowed upon the young prince aroused the anger and jealousy of Man Singh's turbulent feudatories, so much so that when called upon by their suzerain to assist him in a campaign against the Arabs, they refused, and curtly replied that he could seek assistance from his favourite.

Bappa was quite equal to the occasion, and by employing his powers of diplomatic persuasion, succeeded in winning over his rivals, and getting them to serve under his command. The Arab forces threatening Mewar were utterly routed, and pursued into Gujarat, as far as Cambay, the last capital of Bappa's ancestor Siladitya. Here he installed as ruler a chief named Jai Sekhar of the Chavada clan of Rajputs, in the place of the Arab leader Salim, who had previously taken possession of the town.

Having done this, Bappa returned to Chitor, his prestige greatly enhanced. His sweeping victories, however, though they raised him to such dazzling heights, spelt disaster for his sovereign the Mori, for whose glory they were ostensibly achieved.

Man Singh had committed the grave mistake of remaining behind in Mewar, instead of personally leading his vassals in the recent campaign, and by this action he forfeited the last shred of their loyalty.

The nobles gave vent to their discontent by becoming the leaders of a revolution, which culminated in the storming of Chitor, during which Man Singh, the last reigning descendant of Chandragupta and Asoka, met his death.[1]

Bappa was immediately unanimously elected as sovereign of the kingdom, and in the citadel of Chitor the faithful Bhil, Baleo, assisted by his comrade Dewa, who both had accompanied Bappa on his flight from Nagda, made the *tika* or mark of sovereignty on the brow of the new king, a rite which is to this day performed by their descendants, whenever a new Maharana succeeds to the throne of Mewar.

[1] The Mori section of the Pramara clan claims descent from Chandragupta Maurya, through Samprati Maurya or "Mori", the grandson of Asoka, who ruled over the western portion of the Mauryan empire.

Tod in his *Rajasthan*, vol. i. chapter xxv. p. 235, in describing the buildings in the celebrated fortress of Komulmer in Mewar, mentions a Jain temple there, ascribed by tradition to Samprati Raja, which seems to provide definite historical basis to the Pramara claim.

Bappa assumed the temporal title of "Hindua Suraj", or Sun of the Hindus, and the spiritual one of "Ekling ca Diwan", or vicegerent of Siva, originally given to him by his religious preceptor Harita.

His reign marks the commencement of the long and glorious history of the Gehlotes or Children of the Cave,[1] one of the greatest dynasties of mediæval India, and considered to-day the first Hindu royal house.

Immediately after his coronation the new ruler undertook a journey to Surashtra, where he obtained in marriage the hand of the daughter of the Chavada prince Jai Sekhar, who had been one of his allies in the recent war.

We must at this point revert to events in Western India, as the history of Mewar is closely linked with that part of the country.

Gujarat.

Jai Sekhar, originally a petty chief of the district of Panchasar on the borders of the Rann of Kutch, very soon after his installation at Cambay made himself ruler of a large portion of Gujarat, and later extended his authority over a considerable part of the Surashtra peninsula, establishing his capital at Deobunder, off the shores of the Gulf of Cambay.

From this convenient spot on the island, the Chavada king appears to have sent out a pirate fleet to prey on the Arab dhows trading between Basra and the ports of Western India, and it seems highly probable that Salim, the Arab leader defeated by Bappa, was at the head of an expedition sent by the Viceroy of Sind to punish the Chavadas for their depredations.

The kingdom which Jai Sekhar had acquired was, however, not destined to be his for long.

Eastern Chalukya kingdom.

The Arabs were by no means the only people hostile to him; he possessed a formidable enemy of his own race in the person of Bhuvada, a prince of the former Deccan ruling house of the Chalukyas, who had, in spite of the loss of their throne to the Rashtrakutas, remained a large and powerful clan. Kubja Vishnu-vardhana, brother of Pulakesin II. and his viceroy in Vengi, had, in the year 615, founded the dynasty of the Eastern Chalukyas by proclaiming himself king, and his descendants had continued to rule Vengi even subsequent to the fall of the Western house in 753.

[1] So-called from their cave-born ancestor Goha; this dynastic name was changed at a later date for that of Sesodia.

Bhuvada found allies in numerous minor chieftains of the Chalukya clan, who were helpful by reason of their widespread influence throughout the country.

Attacked by Bhuvada at the head of a large force, Jai Sekhar, in spite of a most gallant resistance, suffered complete defeat. His capital was taken by storm, and he himself was slain in a last desperate effort to defend it.

Jai Sekhar's death did not, however, involve the extinction of his house. Before going forth to meet his death, he had appealed to his wife, Rupasundari, the sister of one of his principal officers, Sur Pal, to whom he was passionately devoted, and had implored her for the sake of the child she was expecting, not to perform the rite of *Sati*, but to live in order that the child, if a son, should carry on the line of the Chavadas ; and he bequeathed her to the care of her brother Sur Pal, whom he enjoined to smuggle her out of the fortress disguised, and to protect her with his life.

Sur Pal was faithful to his trust, and in due course the son was born and named by his mother, Vanraj.

The life of Vanraj Chavada is a romance in itself. His childhood and boyhood were spent in hiding, guarded and watched over by his mother and a few faithful Rajput clansmen.

Sur Pal did not survive his exile, and, at his death, his place was taken by an aged Jain monk, who had discovered the secret of the hidden prince and resolved to protect him and the widowed queen.

This venerable man instructed Vanraj in the religious tenets of the Hindus and the Jains, whilst his mother insisted upon his becoming proficient in physical exercises, instilling into his mind a martial spirit, with a view to his one day restoring the departed glories of the Chavadas.

On reaching manhood Vanraj decided to head a band of brigands, whose spoils were to provide the funds for the sustenance of his future army.

Among his principal supporters in this venture were a shepherd named Anhil and a former merchant called Jambi, and a woman, Shri Devi, the sister of a merchant.

The story of the first meeting of Vanraj and Shri Devi is worthy of mention in greater detail because of the typical instance it provides of the Rajput ideals and mentality.

Vanraj and his band, having heard that a merchant of great wealth resided in the village of Kakara, determined to attempt to seize it.

They surrounded the merchant's home after nightfall, and at a given signal broke in, to be faced by the peaceful spectacle of the owner and his sister Shri Devi preparing their evening meal.

Undeterred by this, Vanraj, seeing an article of great value which he desired to appropriate, stretched out his hand, and in so doing accidentally plunged it into a dish of curds, which formed part of the supper the merchant and his sister were to sit down to.

According to Rajput custom, to touch food in any one's home, even though only with the hand, makes the person who does so a guest within its walls ; and to rob a host is, to the Rajput, the vilest and most unforgivable of sins. Vanraj immediately gave the signal to his followers to withdraw, and he himself, after solemnly saluting the merchant, left the house without taking anything from its precincts.

Shri Devi, impressed by the chivalry of an ordinary leader of dacoits, as she presumed him to be, followed him and his band, and begged them to return and partake of the hospitality of their house.

Vanraj made no secret of his true identity in his dealings with Shri Devi and her brother, nor of the ultimate aim he had in view, and, almost from the first moment of his entering their home, they became his most devoted followers.

The small band of dacoits gradually increased in numbers until it represented a formidable army, but Vanraj imposed levies in money and kind only upon the rich, while the poor, on the contrary, could always rely upon assistance from him.

Wherever he and his army encamped the villagers would seek him out and beg his help in the adjustment of their grievances and disputes, and ere long Vanraj, who had commenced his career as a robber chief, became vested with the attributes of a national leader.

In the year 765 Vanraj reached the supreme goal of his ambition, and having succeeded in silencing all opposition, ascended the throne of his father.

Faithful to the promise made to her in the days of his adversity, he allowed Shri Devi to annoint him in his dignity of monarch, and he appointed the ex-merchant Jambi to be his Prime Minister.

Foundation of the Anhilvara kingdom.

The King gave lasting testimony to his other devoted adherent, the shepherd Anhil, by giving the new capital which he founded the name of Anhilvara Patan.

The reign of Vanraj ended with his death in 780.

He was succeeded by his son Yograj, who maintained the integrity of the Chavada kingdom unimpaired, as did also his four immediate successors, but the details of the reigns of all these monarchs are very little known.

The Chavada dynasty came to a violent close in the reign of the sixth sovereign, Bhubhata by name (937–961), largely owing to the mistaken action of the King himself. During the early part of his reign there arrived in his capital of Anhilvara three brothers, named Raji, Bija and Dandaka, descendants of Bhuvada, the Chalukya opponent of Jai Sekhar, who had all three adopted the life of religious mendicants.

The Yogi or Sanyasi is at all times considered an honoured guest both in the palace of the Maharaja and the hut of the Hindu ryot, and the three brothers were hospitably entertained at the court of Bhubhata and invited to witness a grand review of the army by the King in person.

Raji, the eldest brother, himself previously a distinguished soldier, noticed during the progress of the review a faulty manœuvre by a body of the royal cavalry, and immediately pointed it out to the King.

Greatly impressed by his knowledge of military tactics, and realising immediately that the garb of the mendicant concealed the Rajput of high rank, Bhubhata, who was ignorant of his Chalukya descent, pressed Raji to forsake the religious life, and to enter a military career in his service.

After some hesitation Raji accepted the royal offer, and in a few years rose to such heights in his sovereign's favour as to become a successful aspirant to the hand of his daughter Lila Devi. This marriage brought disaster to the monarch and to his house. Lila Devi bore her husband a son, who was named Mulraj, and who from the first became an object of almost extravagant affection on the part of his grandfather.

When Mulraj had attained the age of early manhood, Bhubhata, one day under the influence of opium, which is known to have always been freely indulged in by the Rajputs, suddenly announced in the presence of his entire court that he wished to abdicate his throne in favour of his grandson.

When he regained his normal condition of sobriety he withdrew this declaration, but the mischief had been done, and Mulraj, who combined great ambition with lack of principle, refused to recognise this withdrawal, and calling upon his Chalukya kinsmen to assist him, took arms against his grandfather.

Treachery within the precincts of the palace still further aided Mulraj, who was entirely victorious.

Bhubhata was slain, most probably by the hand of his grandson, who was immediately proclaimed King of Anhilvara.

Accession of the Chalukyas to the Anhilvara throne.

In spite of the despicable crime which had raised him to the throne, Mulraj Chalukya proved himself a wise ruler, and the period of the Chalukya dynasty, founded by him, is still considered by the Hindus of Gujarat as the Golden Age of their country.

During his long reign, 942–997, Mulraj made his authority supreme throughout the whole of Gujarat, inclusive of Surashtra and Kutch.

The kingdom of Anhilvara Patan rose under the Chalukya king to greater prosperity and glory than under any previous monarch; he had, by his great gifts as a ruler, won the wholesale allegiance of nobles and people alike, yet the heart of Mulraj was stricken with remorse for the murder to which he owed his throne; and finally, in the year 997, he decided to make the only atonement which to him seemed adequate, and to exchange the sceptre for the begging bowl of the ascetic, and abdicated in favour of his son Chamund Rai.

The accession of this king to the throne of Anhilvara coincided with that of Mahmud the Image Breaker at Ghazni, and from that time onwards the history of the Hindu monarchies of mediæval India becomes interwoven with that of the Moslem states of Central Asia.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER I

Owing to the very meagre and unreliable native records of the period, the portion of this chapter which deals with the history of the Chavada dynasty of Anhilvara Patan has presented considerable difficulty.

The history of this line of rulers was written during the reign of the Chalukyas, and there is much evidence in support of the theory that the authors, mostly bards of the Chalukya princes, were somewhat inaccurate in their records of the earlier epoch.

Tod in his *Rajasthan*, vol. i. chapter iv. p. 197, states that Bappa Rawal married the daughter of Esupgole, Prince of Bunderdhiva, who was most probably the father of Vanraj Chavada.

Tod's authority was derived from the ancient bardic chronicles of Mewar.

The local Gujarat history of the Chavadas contains no

mention of any prince of that dynasty named Esupgole, which would seem therefore to have been one of the titles borne either by Jai Sekhar or by Vanraj.

According to the Gujarat chronicles Jai Sekhar lost his throne as early as 695 and therefore previous to the fall of Valabhi and the birth of either Goha or Bappa, and if this was so, then it must have been Vanraj and not his father who became the ally and father-in-law of the founder of the Gehlote dynasty in Mewar.

The Mewar chronicles, however, describe Esupgole as Prince of Bunderdhiva, the ancient name of the island of Deobunder, Jai Sekhar's capital, which indicates that he must have ruled before the foundation of the later capital of Anhilvara Patan by Vanraj which, from his reign until the overthrow of the Hindu kingdom of Gujarat by the Moslems, gave its name to the entire kingdom.

In dealing with the history of the kingdom of Valabhi and its later offshoot Mewar, I incline to the belief held by Tod, that the Gehlote claim to descent from Rama has a true historical basis, whilst admitting the possibility that Scythian, and possibly also Persian, blood ran in the veins of the princes of Mewar.

Later historians, notably Mr. Vincent Smith and the eminent Indian scholar Professor Bhandarkar, believe the Gehlotes to be descended from the Gurjjaras, one of the foreign tribes who entered India with the Huns, but the most complete refutation to this view is presented by the profound reverence paid by all Rajputs and by the majority of orthodox Hindus to the royal house of Mewar, whose head they style Hindupati or chief of the Hindu race.

This title they considered to be the natural right of the descendant of the royal line of Ajodhya, and would never allow it to be accorded to the scion of a foreign barbarian tribe. Up to the present day, the highest honour a Rajput prince or chief can obtain is the hand in marriage of a princess of the house of Mewar.

CHAPTER II

THE HOUSE OF GHAZNI, A.D. 1001–1180

Mahmud's invasion of Lahore kingdom.

It was in the year 1001 that Mahmud of Ghazni started on the first of his seventeen Indian campaigns, by advancing against Jaipal of Lahore, the Hindu sovereign who had already suffered so grievously from the attacks of his father Sabuktegin.

Mahmud's confidence in his ultimate success can be best gauged by the fact that he invaded India with an army consisting merely of 10,000 cavalry; and, heading this small force, gave battle to Jaipal, who commanded 12,000 horsemen and 30,000 infantry, on November 27, 1001, at Peshawar.

In the long and bitter contest which ensued, the Moslems gained a sweeping victory, owing not only to Mahmud's brilliant leadership, but also to the fanatical religious fervour which they themselves displayed in following him. Five thousand Hindus, at the very least, perished in this battle, and Jaipal himself and all his remaining vassals were taken prisoners by the Mohammedans.

The entire dominions of Jaipal thus fell into the hands of the Ghazni monarch, but Mahmud, who aimed far more at the overthrow of the Hindu religion than at the annexation of the actual country, was content to leave Hindu political independence untrammelled, on the undertaking, by Jaipal, to pay an annual tribute to the Ghazni treasury.

The crushing defeat which Jaipal suffered was one from which his proud spirit could not recover, nor could he bring himself to bow the knee to one whom he regarded in the light of an upstart adventurer, whose bitter enmity towards the Hindu faith was fully known to him. He gave orders for the erection of a formidable funeral pyre; and, donning his robes of state, and followed by his queens, the aged monarch and his consorts perished in the flames.

The kingdom of Lahore thus descended to his son Anandpal, who apparently accepted the obligations entered into by his father with the King of Ghazni, but who, in reality, was merely biding his time until a favourable moment should arrive in which he could expel the Moslem ruler from Hindustan.

In the year 1004 Mahmud, returning to Ghazni from one of his numerous military expeditions, was told that Bijai Rai, Raja of Bheera, one of the Rajput princes who had been amongst those to agree to pay him monetary tribute, had failed to do so. He immediately retaliated by invading the Raja's territory with a punitive force.

Though one of the minor sovereigns of Northern India, Bijai Rai and his loyal clansmen made a heroic stand for their freedom. Several times they succeeded in repulsing the Moslems, and it almost seemed as though their indomitable courage would result in final victory for their arms. But the crucial moment came at sunset, the hour of evening prayer, when the entire Moslem army, from the King to the humblest soldier, turned towards Mecca, and executed the customary genuflections. As the last words of common prayer rang out, Mahmud sprang to his feet, and realising the religious fervour which at that moment permeated all ranks, cried out that the Prophet had promised him victory.

Inspired to renewed effort by the words of their King, the Moslems pressed their attack forward with the greatest fury, and finally succeeded in driving the Rajputs back into the fort of Bheera, to which they then laid siege.

Bijai Rai and his gallant men held out for some days against the Ghazni army, but, realising that the fort was no longer tenable, he and his sadly depleted forces made a sortie, fighting their way through the Moslems, and finally establishing themselves in a neighbouring wood. In spite of the hopelessness of his position, the Rajput monarch and the small remnant of the survivors under his command continued to put up a noble defence, until, completely surrounded, he sought death by falling on the point of his sword.

The entire territory of Bheera was immediately annexed by Mahmud, and added to his dominions, but this sweeping victory was soon to be placed in jeopardy by the greatest attempt ever yet made by the Hindus to expel the Moslems from their country.

Mohammedan State of Multan.

At this time the city and district of Multan were governed by a Mohammedan ruler of Afghan descent, Fateh Daud

Khan Lodi, a grandson of Shaikh Hamid Lodi, who had been a vassal of Sabuktegin.

Normally this prince acknowledged the suzerainty of the King of Ghazni, but in point of fact he was determined to take the first opportunity to try and establish his independence. To this end he sent envoys to Anandpal of Lahore, suggesting an alliance, in the hope also of securing his active co-operation.

The Raja of Lahore in agreeing to this alliance was most probably actuated by the desire to weaken Moslem influence in India by playing one Moslem ruler against the other, as it is most unlikely that he can have desired the permanent establishment of a Mohammedan kingdom. He cordially responded to the suggestions of the Prince of Multan by despatching a considerable force to join Fateh Daud Khan's army, which awaited the attack of the Ghazni troops near Peshawar.

This united attempt was, however, frustrated by the military genius of Mahmud, and the bravery of his troops.

As a result of his defeat, the ruler of Multan was compelled not only to renew his acknowledgement of Mahmud's suzerainty, but also to pay a larger tribute in money to the conqueror. Anandpal, however, who, though momentarily checked, did not consider himself permanently beaten, took refuge in Kashmir, where Sangrama the reigning king granted him protection.

Mahmud was not given much respite after this victory, and within a short space of time found himself faced by a fresh danger in the shape of a threat to his ancestral dominions in Afghanistan. His father-in-law Alik Khan of Transoxiana, growing jealous of his rapidly increasing power, suddenly invaded these territories.

Mahmud promptly returned to Central Asia, taking with him from India five hundred war elephants, which he posted at various strategic points.

The opposing armies met near Balkh, and the fierce battle which ensued brought a decisive victory to Mahmud, principally owing to the very important part played by the elephants. Alik Khan sued for peace, and Mahmud, having restored order in Afghanistan, was able to return to India, where the conditions imperatively called for his presence.

The government of his Indian territories had been entrusted by Mahmud to a renegade Hindu Raja named Sewakpal, who had, to all outward appearance, accepted Islam. This man, selecting an opportune moment in the

year 1005, revolted against Mahmud, who saw himself compelled again to lead his army across the Indus.

The actual rising by Sewakpal was promptly quelled and the leader captured and imprisoned for life, but this had merely been the prelude to a far greater effort at independence, which was headed by Anandpal, who had now returned from Kashmir more than ever determined to drive the Moslems permanently from the Land of the Five Rivers.

He sent out proposals to all the most important rulers in Northern and Central India to join him in forming a great confederacy, which had for its aim the expulsion of the hated Mlechha (Eater of the flesh of the Sacred Cow) from the country.

These proposals were enthusiastically received, the confederacy was duly formed and all the Hindu sovereigns bound themselves by solemn oath to absolute loyalty to each other and the common cause, pledging themselves not to conclude peace until their object had been attained.

Amongst the members of the confederacy were two of the most powerful sovereigns in India, Rajyapal the Pratihara Ruler of Kanauj and Ganda the Chandel King of Mahoba ; and the united forces were still further strengthened by the formidable hill tribe of the Gakkars, who joined the standard of Anandpal with a force of 30,000 men.

The women of the Rajput clans, brought up in the splendid traditions of the great epics and believing themselves to be the successors of the heroines of ancient days, strove by every means in their power to hearten their men folk in the struggle that lay before them. This struggle was looked upon by all in the light of a Holy War in which their country, their faith and the sanctity of their homes were at stake.

The princesses of the royal houses melted down their jewels, gold and silver bracelets, even their nose rings, the most cherished ornament of the Hindu women, to provide money for the armies ; whilst their poorer sisters spun cotton and sent their takings, however small, to help fill the treasuries of the allied sovereigns.

All preparations completed, Anandpal placed himself at the head of an immense army, which comprised the allies and their troops, and marched towards the Indus to meet Mahmud's forces.

It was in the spring of 1008 that the opposing armies first came into touch. The Ghazni forces found themselves assailed on all sides by the Hindus, prominent amongst these

being the fierce Gakkars, who, knowing every inch of the ground, were quite invincible.

Mahmud was utterly powerless to stem these desperate assaults and was compelled to entrench himself with his men protected by a *zariba* of pointed stakes and thorns. Even these entrenchments were stormed by the entire Gakkar force of 30,000 men, supported by the main army of the Rajputs.

The terrible battle which ensued must have undoubtedly ended with the complete annihilation of the Ghazni army, but for the extraordinary resourcefulness of Mahmud. He had included in his equipment a supply of naphtha balls, knowing from experience what a powerful factor they could be against elephants. At the most critical moment of the fight, he commanded his soldiers to throw these balls amongst the enemy elephants, with the brilliant result that the elephant from the back of which the Hindu commander was directing operations, terrified by the rain of fiery missiles, turned and fled. The allied army, panic-stricken by the loss of their leader, beat a hasty and disorderly retreat, pursued for some distance by a force of approximately 16,000 Afghan and Arabian cavalry, belonging to the Ghazni army.

Although the allied armies were still of considerable strength, Mahmud's victory was sufficiently great for him to dictate terms of peace, which were accepted by Anandpal. Chief amongst these conditions was that the King of Ghazni should have the right to march his armies through the Lahore territories.

Immediately after the treaty had been signed, Mahmud returned to Ghazni.

One of the towns which had been taken by storm by his troops during this campaign was Nagarkot or Kangra, one of the most sacred spots in the Punjab. The ancient and immensely wealthy temple dedicated to the goddess Devi Bajesri was sacked by them, and was the first of a series of similar desecrations perpetrated by order of Mahmud during his numerous invasions of India, which appear to have been undertaken mainly to satisfy his fanatical hatred of the Hindu creed.

In the year 1010 Mahmud again invaded India, this time with the object of destroying the Hindu shrines of Thanesar, situated in Anandpal's territory. The King of Lahore attempted to avert the attack by sending a letter to the King of Ghazni couched in friendly terms, begging him to

spare Thanesar, and promising him, in return for this concession, a warm welcome in his country and an additional tribute from the immense revenue accruing to the shrine.

The only reply sent to the ruler of Lahore was : " With the assistance of God I will root out idol worship from all India ", and in consequence of this Anandpal once again appealed to the Hindu sovereigns of the North to join him in defending the sacred fanes of the Hindu faith.

However, before any united Hindu resistance could be organised, Mahmud and his army, by means of a series of forced marches, had reached Thanesar, and the ancient shrines situated in the heart of the Kurukshetra, the historic battlefield on which the Pandavas had fought their Kaurava cousins for the sovereignty of Indraprastha, were pillaged and the images broken ; the most sacred amongst these were carried by Mahmud to Ghazni to be publicly trampled upon by the horses of his fanatical followers. These actions by Mahmud constituted a notable triumph for him, but at the same time they laid the foundations of that bitter and implacable hatred between Hindu and Mohammedan, which, though sometimes controlled under certain wise and tolerant rulers, has survived under the surface up to the present day.

Mahmud renewed his attacks upon India again in the year 1019, this time with the object firstly of defeating Rajyapal, the Pratihara King of Kanauj, ten years earlier one of the principal allies of Anandpal, and secondly of destroying the holy shrines of Krishna at Mathura. For this double purpose he placed himself at the head of an army of 100,000 cavalry and 20,000 infantry and rapidly succeeded in reaching the gates of Kanauj.

Rajyapal, completely taken by surprise by this unexpected attack, made no attempt at resistance and surrendered the city, and it is typical of the character of Mahmud that, whilst sparing Kanauj as a whole and demanding a merely formal acknowledgement of his suzerainty from the Raja, he ordered the complete destruction of every Hindu temple within its walls.

From Kanauj Mahmud proceeded with his army to Mathura, the centre of the worship of Krishna, which exercised such an immense hold upon the Hindus of all castes of that day, as it has continued to do up to modern times.

Mathura itself, the birthplace of Krishna, and the scene of his escape from his uncle the usurper Kans ; Mahaban, where the deified hero grew to manhood under the care of his foster-parents Nand and Yasoda ; Brindaban, where he

danced with the milkmaids of Braj and won the heart of Radha—all suffered at the pitiless hand of the despoiler.

During the twenty days of Mahmud's stay at Mathura, the city and the entire sacred district of Braj Mandal were subjected to a reign of terror.

The Rajput Prince of Mahaban attempted a heroic defence of the holy shrines ; but, realising his failure, called his wife and daughters to him, and bidding them farewell, stabbed them to the heart, thus preserving them from the fate meted out to so many others of becoming slaves in a Musulman harem. He then took his own life.

Twenty thousand, at least, of the unhappy inhabitants of Mathura—men, women and children—were marched off into slavery in distant Ghazni, and the baggage camels of Mahmud's army returned to his capital laden with plunder from the holy shrine.

Although Mahmud had been undoubtedly victorious, his victories, with the one exception of Kanauj, had been won against minor Rajas, and the more powerful Hindu sovereigns, who had assisted Anandpal of Lahore in the great struggle of 1009, notably Ganda of Mahoba, continued as formidable as ever.

Their indignation with their former ally Rajyapal of Kanauj for what they considered his treachery to Hinduism in capitulating to Mahmud was boundless, and they determined to mete out a terrible punishment to him.

They awaited the King of Ghazni's return to his own territory, and immediately afterwards Kanauj was attacked by an army commanded by Vidyadhar, the heir-apparent of Mahoba, assisted by the chief of Gwalior, the principal vassal of the Chandel house.

They succeeded in taking the city by storm ; Rajyapal was put to death, and only a greatly diminished territory was left to his son Trilochanapal.

Mahmud naturally looked upon this attack as directed against himself, and determined to avenge it at some future period. In the year 1020 he again invaded India, this time from the borders of Kashmir, which kingdom he had also been endeavouring to subdue. Determined to make one great effort to break the Hindu confederacy for all time, he directed his army first against its organiser, Anandpal of Lahore.

The Punjab was overrun from end to end, and Anandpal was obliged to take refuge at Ajmere, the capital of the head of his clan, Bilandeo Chauhan, Rao of Sambhar.

Mahmud, taking possession of Lahore, appointed as his viceroy there one of his most famous officers, the slave Malik Ayaz.

Musulman rule extended to the Punjab.

Thus Lahore, originally named Lohkot, said to have been founded by, and named after, Lava or Loh, son of Rama and Sita, and with it the entire Punjab, passed under the rule of the Musulmans.

From the Punjab Mahmud led his victorious troops to Central India, where on the plains of Bundelkhand he was faced by Ganda of Mahoba, at the head of a powerful army.

Just as the fight was about to commence, the nerve of the Chandel king failed, possibly because he feared a similar fate to that of Anandpal. He fled from the battlefield, leaving his entire camp and war elephants to the mercy of the Mohammedans.

The fortress of Kalanjar, one of the greatest strongholds in Central India, was occupied by the Ghazni troops, but for the time being Mahmud evidently considered it unwise to annex any further territories belonging to the Chandel king, for the simple reason that they were situated at such a great distance from his main base.

In 1023 he attempted a further invasion of the Chandel kingdom, but was conciliated by Ganda and his powerful vassal of Gwalior, who despatched envoys to him with rich presents and assured him of a friendly welcome to their territories.

Mahmud, looking upon this attitude as an acknowledgement of his supremacy, abstained from any renewed attack.

Changes in Anhilvara.

We now come to the last and greatest of Mahmud's Indian campaigns, his famous expedition to Gujarat in the year 1025.

Chamund Rai, the son of Mulraj I., had succeeded to the Chalukya kingdom in 997 and reigned until the year 1010, when, following in his father's footsteps, he abdicated from the throne in order to lead the life of an ascetic.

He was succeeded by his son Durlabha, who governed the Chalukya kingdom until his death in 1022, and it was his son Bhim Deo I., whose reign extended over the long period of fifty years, 1022–1072, who was called upon to face the invasion of the Afghan hordes of Ghazni.

Hindu Gujarat was a prize great enough to tempt the desire of any ambitious conqueror. The rich plains abounding in beautiful and wealthy cities, with their buildings of the noblest type of Hindu and, above all, of

Jain architecture ; her ports, to which Arab dhows brought the choicest produce of Arabia and the Persian Gulf, all combined to make the kingdom of Anhilvara one of the choicest regions of India.

But, in directing his forces towards Gujarat, Mahmud was actuated far more by the fervour of the iconoclast than by the lust for conquest.

The Temple of Somnath.

On the shores of the Arabian Sea, not far from the ancient city of Verawal, the port to-day of the little Musulman native state of Junagarh, stood one of the most universally venerated of all the many Hindu shrines in India, the Temple of Somnath.

Dedicated to Siva, under his title of Somesvara, "The Lord of the Moon", the temple was looked upon both as one of the most splendid and the richest centres of Hindu pilgrimage.

The Queen who came to pray that she might present her lord with an heir ; the Raja who desired to return thanks for a victory gained against an hereditary foe ; the merchant who wished to express his gratitude for the safe arrival of his ships ; and the humblest peasant, who invoked the holy blessing that his fields might yield a plentiful harvest—all brought their offerings, great and small, to swell the treasury of the Lord of the Moon, before whose altar five hundred nautch girls, the wives of the god, kept up a continuous religious dance.

It was this particular shrine which Mahmud selected as the goal of his last invasion of Indian soil ; he was followed by an army which included no less than 30,000 volunteers who had joined his forces solely for the purpose of assisting him in his war for the extermination of what they considered idolatry.

Advancing from Multan, across the Indian desert, Mahmud's first halt was outside Ajmere, the capital of Bilandeo of Sambhar, whom he desired to punish for giving shelter to the defeated Anandpal. Here, however, he met with a decided reverse, as Bilandeo and his Rajputs, realising their dangerous position, had evacuated the city and established themselves in the impregnable hill fort of Taragarh, from which they could best defend the city.

Several attempts undertaken by Mahmud and his troops to take this stronghold either by assault or by the slower method of siege having proved unsuccessful, he determined to abandon this plan ; but the triumph of the Rajputs in their victory was overshadowed by the death of their

gallant sovereign, who fell, pierced by a chance arrow just as the Moslems retired from the spot.

Mahmud captures Anhilvara Patan.

From Rajputana the Ghazni army advanced over the rich plains of Gujarat and effected an entry into the capital, Anhilvara Patan, unopposed by the Maharaja Bhim Deo, who had retired into the mountains with his army, not, however, without leaving a force to garrison the Temple of Somnath.

When, after marching along the shores of the Arabian Sea, Mahmud and his troops reached the gates of the shrine, they found themselves confronted by a body of Rajputs, all of whom had vowed to defend the holy place to the bitter end.

Time after time the Moslems pressed forward to the assault and were flung back suffering heavy loss, their battle cry "Din Din Allah el Akbar!" (For the Faith, for the Faith, God is Great) being met by fierce shouts from the Rajputs of "Chaul-Isvara ki Jai!" (Victory to Chaul-Isvara).

For three days this hopeless stand continued; finally Mahmud succeeded in forcing an entrance into the temple, and then only over the dead bodies of the heroic defenders. From the outer hall of the temple Mahmud, followed by his chief officers, penetrated into the Holy of Holies where the high priest and his attendants had taken refuge.

For a brief moment it seemed as though Mahmud himself were awed by the wonderful beauty of the shrine and, taking advantage of this apparent hesitation, the high priest implored him to spare the shrine, offering him a large portion of its treasures in ransom. These supplications were met by the reply from Mahmud's lips: "I desire to go down to posterity as the Image Breaker, not as the Image Seller"; at the same moment he raised his great war mace, and, with a single blow, shattered into four pieces the gem-studded "Lingam", nine feet high, phallic symbol under which the Lord of the Moon was worshipped.

The Temple of Somnath was entirely destroyed, the adjacent *Suraj Mandir* or Temple of the Sun was severely battered, and, having accomplished this, Mahmud next attacked the strong fort of Gundava in Kutch, behind the walls of which Bhim Deo had taken refuge. The fortress

[1] The temple of Siva or Isvara in the port of Chaul was highly venerated by the Chalukya Rajputs as the shrine of their tutelary deity.

was stormed and the entire state treasure of the Gujarat monarch seized, but Bhim Deo himself succeeded in making his escape.

Returning to Anhilvara, Mahmud fell completely under the spell of the beauty of the city and surrounding country, and had serious thoughts of permanently establishing his seat of government in Gujarat. Finally, however, his principal advisers dissuaded him from this course by pointing out to their monarch that, having only imperfectly conquered the country, he would be running considerable risk from the many enemies still existing there. He therefore issued a proclamation deposing Maharaja Bhim Deo and with him the entire Chalukya dynasty, and raising to the throne of Anhilvara a prince, apparently of the former ruling house of the Chavadas, who is given by the Moslem historian Ferishta the name of Dabichalima.[1]

Mahmud's intention was now to return to Ghazni, but, on hearing that Bhim Deo had succeeded in raising a fresh army with which to oppose his retirement through the Punjab, and realising that the Chalukya prince's efforts would almost certainly be supported by every Rajput sovereign of importance in Northern India, he determined to take the far more difficult route by way of the Sind desert.

After a terrible march, during which Mahmud's army suffered intensely from the great heat and from agonies of thirst, he at length, in the year 1026, reached Ghazni.

Laden with the treasures of Somnath and the other desecrated Hindu temples, he made his triumphal entry into the capital from which he had been absent for two and a half years.

Amongst his principal trophies were the gates of the great Temple of Somnath and the four fragments of the broken Lingam, one of which he placed outside his palace, another in the principal mosque of the city, sending the two others to Mecca and Medina respectively, so that all the pilgrims to these places should behold the symbols of the victory of Islam over Hinduism.

Death of Mahmud of Ghazni.

With the exception of a short punitive expedition in 1027 against the Jat tribes of the Indus, the descendants of the Scythian invaders of ancient days, who had harassed his army on its return march, the Gujarat campaign was the last undertaken by Mahmud. He died on April 29, 1030, of stone in the kidney, a complaint from which he had suffered for some years.

[1] This is a corruption, the real name not being clear.

With his death there disappeared one of the most remarkable figures in the history of Central Asia and India, and one whose character presented the most extraordinary contrasts. His religious fanaticism led him to commit the worst crimes where the Hindu population of his dominions was concerned ; and at the same time, to his Moslem subjects he was a just and, according to the age in which he lived, a merciful ruler.

His campaigns were never undertaken with a view to consolidating the conquered Indian territories into a vast empire, but were a succession of cleverly devised military raids, undertaken solely for the purpose of destroying the great centres of Hindu worship throughout the country.

Mahmud, who was survived by twin sons Mohammed and Masa'ud, had declared in his will that the sovereignty should devolve upon Mohammed.

This declaration was, however, strongly opposed by Masa'ud, who had given proof both of military talents and considerable ambition, when acting for some years as his father's viceroy at Ispahan, the capital of the Persian dominions of the house of Ghazni.

Masa'ud wrote to his brother offering to acknowledge him as sovereign of Ghazni, provided he himself permanently retained the rulership of the Persian provinces and that his name was read before Mohammed's in the public prayers.

The King of Ghazni, scenting in this demand the prelude to further acts of rebellion, refused, and assembling his army, marched against his brother.

Masa'ud's popularity with the army in general was far greater than Mohammed's and the unfortunate Ghazni sovereign soon realised that he was surrounded by traitors.

During the forty days' halt on the march, which he had ordered to keep the fast of Ramazan, a conspiracy was entered into amongst the leaders of his army, chief amongst these being one of his uncles and two of his officers. Mohammed was seized in his tent and carried as prisoner to Masa'ud at Herat.

Masa'ud was now proclaimed King of the entire Ghazni kingdom, the whole army swearing allegiance to him, whilst the deposed monarch, in accordance with the merciless custom of the Moslem states of those days, was blinded by order of his successful rival.

The traitors who had brought about Mohammed's downfall were, however, not allowed to enjoy the fruits of their

treachery, for Masa'ud, suspicious lest, having been false to one sovereign, they might fail equally in their allegiance to himself, gave orders that his uncle should be imprisoned and the other two officers executed.

Masa'ud in the year 1031 was crowned King of Ghazni, and the first two years of his reign were entirely occupied in warfare against the Seljuk Tartars.

In 1033, having come to a temporary understanding with them, he turned his attention to Kashmir, which he was anxious to add to his Indian dominions. Hardly had he commenced these operations when he received intelligence that the Seljuks had broken the agreement recently signed and had inflicted a defeat upon his army in Central Asia.

On receipt of the news of this grave danger, Masa'ud immediately abandoned his attempts upon Kashmir and returned to Afghanistan. He soon succeeded, with the assistance of the main body of his army, in averting the peril threatening his kingdom, and, with the knowledge of his security, his desire to add to his Indian dominions revived, and in 1036 he resolved to put them into execution.

The fortress of Hansi in the Punjab, hitherto considered impregnable, was stormed by the Ghazni forces, and Masa'ud succeeded in advancing as far as the village of Sonpat, situated on the ancient battlefield of the Pandava brothers, within the dominions of their descendant the Tuar King of Delhi, titular Lord Paramount of Hindustan. Once again complete victory seemed within Masa'ud's grasp, when, owing to renewed and far more formidable invasion by the Seljuks, he was compelled to march his army back to Afghanistan.

Seljuk conquest of Merv.

The decisive battle was fought near Merv in May 1040, and resulted in a sweeping victory for the Seljuks, who captured Merv and henceforth made it the capital of their empire.

Masa'ud no longer considered Ghazni safe as the seat of his government and determined to transfer it to Lahore, the capital of his Indian dominions. In taking this step he had overrated the loyalty of his army, and just as the officers had conspired against his brother Mohammed, they now plotted to overthrow him ; in the course of his journey to Lahore in 1042 he was taken prisoner and eventually murdered, the conspirators proclaiming the restoration of the throne of Ghazni to the blind Mohammed. His rights to the sovereignty were, however, not long left uncontested. Masa'ud had left two sons, Modud, who was Viceroy of Balkh and

the dependencies of the house of Ghazni in Turkestan, and Madud, who resided at Lahore and governed the Indian provinces.

Immediately on receipt of the news of his father's murder, Modud proceeded to Ghazni, where he was greeted with intense enthusiasm by the army and people in general.

After being formally crowned, he announced his intention of avenging the death of his father, and, placing himself at the head of all the troops remaining in Ghazni he advanced into the Punjab.

At Dantur near Lahore he inflicted a crushing defeat upon the army of his uncle, Mohammed being taken prisoner and executed, together with all the officers who had overthrown Masa'ud.

Modud now sent instructions to his brother at Lahore to the effect that he wished to be proclaimed king in that city also, but the replies he received being unsatisfactory, he determined to enforce his demands by marching on the capital.

Rajput League against the Moslems.

At the critical moment, however, Madud's sudden death made all hostile action unnecessary, and Modud made his entry into Lahore unopposed. This peaceful condition of affairs soon came to an end and Modud's Indian possessions were in the following year thrown into jeopardy by a national rising of the Rajput princes of northern India, headed by Bisal Deo Chauhan, the Rao of Sambhar, son of Bilandeo who had defeated the great Mahmud at Ajmere.

The mantle of Bilandeo had not fallen upon unworthy shoulders, for, with the exception of one figure who will appear on the scene towards the end of this chapter, Bisal Deo was undoubtedly the greatest of the many illustrious sovereigns of the Chauhan line and clan.

Bisal Deo combined the talents of the most gifted scholar and dramatist with the attributes of the soldier, uniting the inborn bravery of the Rajput with the circumspection of the statesman. His skilful diplomacy not only succeeded in conciliating every Rajput sovereign in Northern and Central India, but also in inspiring them either to serve personally under his flag or to aid him in his efforts by sending contingents of their armies.

Bisal Deo was soon in a position to head a powerful force, which made its triumphal progress from town to town, all gates being thrown open to the liberator, the Punjab Chauhans enthusiastically flocking to the standard of the Lord Paramount of their clan.

The holy shrines of Thanesar and Nagarkot were reconquered from the Moslems, and a new image of Devi Bajesri was solemnly installed and consecrated at Nagarkot, to the accompaniment of the chants of the tribal bards of the Chauhans, who sang to the glory of Bisal Deo, the Champion of the Hindus.

All the time fresh local reinforcements were reaching Bisal Deo's army, so that he was enabled to continue his fight for the freeing of his country by attacking Lahore, the seat of the Musulman power in India. His Rajputs stormed the walls of the city in face of the bitterest opposition and soon poured into the streets. Defending the city street by street, and practically house by house, the Moslems succeeded in ousting their assailants from the town of Lahore, but their own losses had been considerable and it seemed unlikely that they would be able to endure the rigours of the siege, which their enemies now entered upon.

The brave garrison held out for days and weeks until at last, despairing of relief and in the throes of famine, they made a final attempt to save the remnants of their army by forsaking the city and cutting their way through the enemy lines.

This sortie, undertaken almost as a forlorn hope, ended in a quite unexpected success, probably because the levies of the Punjab Rajas were becoming exhausted and because, whilst awaiting reinforcements from Rajputana, their leaders were completely taken by surprise.

Defeat of the League.

The Moslems, rushing out of the gates of Lahore to the battle cry of their faith, spread a wild panic amongst the Hindus, who broke their ranks and fled, thus abandoning the prize which seemed so surely within their grasp. Lahore was saved but, in spite of this failure, Bisal Deo had dealt a blow to the power of the house of Ghazni in India, from which it never completely recovered.

Internal dissensions of the Hindu states.

It is possible that the Rao of Sambhar might have ultimately succeeded in entirely driving the Moslems from Indian soil had he not elected, at that moment, to undertake a campaign against Bhim Deo Chalukya of Anhilvara Patan to punish him for having refused to join the recent confederacy entered into by the other Rajput sovereigns.

In this campaign Bisal Deo was assisted by Tejsi, the Sesodia Rana of Mewar and his army, who with their united forces invaded Gujarat.[1]

[1] The tribal name of the Mewar reigning house had not, at this period, been changed from Gehlote to Sesodia, but I have used the later name to avoid confusion.

The bardic chroniclers of the Chauhans and the Sesodias declare that the final victory rested with the invaders and that the town of Bisalnagar, which still exists, was founded to glorify the triumph of Bisal Deo ; but a closer study of the somewhat vague contemporary authorities seems to convey the impression that the fight resulted in a draw, and that Bisalnagar was merely the formal commemoration of a treaty of peace and friendship concluded between the conflicting parties.

Events in Anhilvara.

We will now turn our attention to the history of the Chalukya dynasty of Anhilvara where, in the year 1072, Bhim Deo's long reign came to an end with his death.

His eldest son Kshem Raj, being illegitimate, made no attempt to claim the throne, which he abandoned to his younger brother Karan, who occupied it until his death in 1094.

Karan's son Sidh Raj being a minor, the Queen Mother Miyanalladevi, instead of following the Rajput custom of *sati*, assumed the regency for her child and proved herself to be one of those courageous, clear-sighted women so frequently met with amongst the Rajput princesses ; she not only ruled the Chalukya dominions wisely, but also strove, by all means in her power, to train her son to be worthy of his great heritage. Her hopes and ambitions were not disappointed, for the reign of Sidh Raj brought the glory of the Chalukya dynasty to its zenith.

Like all his dynasty, he was a man of the highest culture and a patron of all the arts, quite especially of architecture. He caused magnificent temples, both Hindu and Jain, and lofty palaces to be erected, and the country was beautified by artificial lakes.

The great shrine of Somnath, so cruelly destroyed by Mahmud, rose from its ashes more splendid even than before.

Anhilvara became a centre of commerce, trade being brought overland from different parts of India and, by sea, from the Persian Gulf.

It was impossible for a sovereign in those days not to cherish warlike ambitions but, though Sidh Raj was always successful in the campaigns which he undertook, there is little doubt that the result of these victories in later days weakened the fabric of the Chalukya kingdom by depleting the man-power of the country and creating many hostile factors outside it.

Of the two principal campaigns fought by Sidh Raj, the earliest and the most important was that against Yasod-

harman Pramara, King of Malwa, resulting in the conquest of that vast kingdom and the assumption, by the Chalukya king, of the additional title of Avantinatha or Lord of Avanti, the ancient name of Malwa.

The second of these was undertaken against one of Sidh Raj's own vassals, Ra Khengar, a scion of the noble Yadu clan of Rajputs claiming descent from Krishna, who was at that time reigning over the Junagarh district of Kathiawar.[1]

The origin of this campaign and many of its incidents are worthy to be mentioned in some detail as demonstrating the lofty Rajput ideals and the ingrained chivalry of the race. In the village of Majevadi, in Ra Khengar's territory, there dwelt a humble potter, who possessed a daughter named Ranik Devi whose rare beauty inspired a bard of those days to say that " wherever she moved she left the impress of her feet in rose colour on the ground ".[2] The fame of her beauty even reached the court of Anhilvara, and Sidh Raj, disregarding her humble origin, sent his envoy in state to the potter of Majevadi demanding the hand of his daughter in marriage.

Ra Khengar had become violently enamoured of Ranik Devi, whom he had frequently encountered on his rides abroad, and hearing that the overtures made by Sidh Raj had been accepted, determined to forestall his overlord.

The hut of the potter was surrounded by a body of Yadu horsemen and Ranik Devi was abducted and carried off to the palace of Ra Khengar, where the marriage ceremony was immediately performed by the Brahmin priests.

Roused to fury by the act of his vassal, Sidh Raj called together his forces and forthwith marched upon Junagarh, only to find the gates of the fortress closed by order of Ra Khengar, who did not intend to allow his prize to be wrested from him.

Every effort to storm the fortress failed with heavy loss to the assailants, and victory would most probably have come to the Yadus but for the treachery of two cousins of their King, who, to revenge themselves upon him for some personal grievance, opened one of the gates to the enemy.

The Chalukyas immediately took possession of the fort and Ra Khengar, defending himself to the last, fell sword in hand.

[1] The suzerainty of the Anhilvara kings was never willingly accepted by the princes of Junagarh, and the Chalukya and Yadu clans were hereditary enemies.

[2] A. K. Forbes, the *Ras Mala.*

The conqueror commanded Ranik Devi to accompany him to his palace at Anhilvara, but the princess, who had given her heart to Ra Khengar, sought an audience of the Chalukya sovereign and clad, like all Hindu widows, in white, prostrated herself at his feet imploring him by the traditions of his race to allow her to become *sati* on the funeral pyre of Ra Khengar, her only true lord.

In spite of the fact that the war had been fought solely to win this woman, Sidh Raj was stirred to the very soul by this appeal, which aroused in him the profound respect always felt by the Rajput for the would-be *sati*.

He not only granted to Ranik Devi the fulfilment of her prayer, but promised to erect a shrine to her memory so that she should go down to posterity as the example of a faithful wife.

The ancient shrine with its now almost defaced statue of Ranik Devi still stands, although only a small group of Jain temples remain to-day, to testify to the past glories of Anhilvara.

A Moslem prince rules in the palace of Ra Khengar (the Nawab of Junagarh), but the ballads and folk-tales telling the story of the heroic lovers are still amongst the favourite literature of the Hindu people of Gujarat.

Sidh Raj died in 1143 childless ; he had failed, in accordance with Hindu custom, to adopt an heir to apply the torch to his funeral pyre and to fill his place on the Chalukya throne.

We know that his uncle Kshem Raj had renounced his right of succession in favour of his younger brother Karan, Sidh Raj's father. In spite of the fact that Kshem Raj, the eldest son of Bhim Deo I. was himself illegitimate, the succession eventually devolved upon his branch of the family.

His grandson Tribhuvanapal became Chief of Dahithali, a feudatory chieftainship of the Chalukya kingdom.

Tribhuvanapal left three sons, who were named Mahipal, Kirtipal and Kumarpal.

Mahipal, the eldest, held the chieftainship of Dahithali, and his sister Devaldevi was married to Anuraj Chauhan, the reigning Prince of Sambhar. The nobles of the kingdom of Anhilvara were called upon to make their choice of a king between these three brothers, and to this end all three were summoned to attend a great Durbar in the palace of Anhilvara, where each was asked in turn by Kandeo, head of the nobles, what methods of government he would employ if raised to be its supreme head.

The attitude of the eldest brother Mahipal evidently impressed the nobles unfavourably, and he was at once cast aside as being too effeminate; the second, when questioned, replied humbly[1] "According to your counsel and instructions", an answer distasteful to the fiery Rajput Thakurs of the Chalukya court. The youngest brother Kumarpal made no reply by word of mouth but, gazing proudly round the hall, drew his sword from its sheath, an act which instantly roused the audience to enthusiasm, and the nobles, without further hesitation, proclaimed him heir to the throne.

Kumarpal was, after Sidh Raj, the greatest of the Chalukya Kings of Anhilvara Patan. His character was, in the strangeness of its contrasts, one of the most remarkable in the entire history of India. Whilst still of tender age, Kumarpal had been a thorn in the flesh of the childless Sidh Raj, who loathed this scion of the royal house because of his illegitimate descent, and also because he realised that he would probably succeed him on the Chalukya throne.

Kumarpal, finding his life endangered by the persecutions of the King, fled to Cambay, where he sought protection with the famous Jain sage, Hemacharya.

Even here his safety was threatened, and it is said that on one occasion a body of the royal troops forced their way into the house of the sage with the intention of capturing the young chief, but that Hemacharya managed to elude them by hiding the future king under a pile of manuscripts.

The Jain sage's influence upon the character of Kumarpal increased greatly during the time he spent under his protection, and grew even more pronounced after his accession to the throne, when he forthwith became a convert to the Jain faith.

It is now that the strange inconsistencies in the monarch's character to which we have alluded begin to show themselves.

Throughout his reign the warlike propensities of the Rajput and the peaceful creed of the Jain, to whom the taking of a life is forbidden, struggled within his soul, and the result of this conflict often led to strange and incongrous results.

A brilliant soldier, he could not resist the temptation of carrying his victorious arms as far as Salpuri in the

[1] A. K. Forbes, *Ras Mala*.

Punjab, where he defeated his brother-in-law Anuraj Chauhan of Sambhar ; yet he would refuse to move his troops during the rainy season for fear of destroying the insect life so abundant at that period, and gave orders, for the same reason, that all the drinking water given to his horses and elephants should be previously strained.

He revoked all fishing and fowling licences, and it is said that a merchant of Anhilvara having ventured to kill a louse, all his property was confiscated by order of the King, who with the proceeds erected a *Yukavihara* (or louse temple) in which these vermin were kept and fed.

The death of Kumarpal in the year 1174 brought about one of those reactions often following upon any extreme religious policy, and his successor Ajaipal, the son of his elder brother Mahipal, immediately embarked upon a violent persecution of the Jain sect.

This was, however, by no means likely to be successful, as Kumarpal had made of Gujarat a veritable stronghold of Jainism.

Innumerable magnificent temples dedicated to the twenty-four *Tirthankars*, the *Jinas* or deified saints of the Jains, were scattered over the country, and the power exercised by the Jain pontiffs was of the very greatest.

Within two years of his accession to the throne, Ajaipal was murdered by Jain partisans and his infant son was placed on the throne under the name of Mulraj II.

Two years later this child died and was succeeded by his uncle Bhim Deo II. (1179–1215), the last of his house.

Though a brave soldier and not devoid of many attributes useful in a ruler, Bhim Deo II. possessed the dangerous trait, so common to the Rajputs and so frequently fatal to them, of allowing some trivial point of honour to involve him in serious quarrels.

Ever since the days of Bisal Deo and Bhim Deo I., the relations between the Chalukyas of Anhilvara Patan and the Chauhans of Sambhar had been strained, irrespective of the fact that, as in the case of Kumarpal and Anuraj, they were united by ties of marriage. On the occasion of the visit of two young Chalukya brothers, cousins of Bhim Deo II., to the court of Somesvara, the reigning Prince of Sambhar, at Ajmere, one of them, in the presence, twirled his moustache. This is considered by the Rajputs as a sign of defiance.

A Chauhan clansman, taking this as an insult to his chief, drew his sword and instantly slew the Chalukya, whose

brother avenged the murder by immediately killing the assassin.

This incident brought the smouldering hatred between the two clans to an outbreak, and Bhim Deo, without further hesitation, marched his armies into the Sambhar territories.

At the commencement success favoured the Chalukyas, Somesvara himself falling on the field of battle, but the Chauhans soon made good their defeat and gained a decisive victory over their opponents, to which victory they were led by the dead king's fifteen-year-old son, Prithvi Raj, destined to become in the future one of the most romantic and tragic figures of Indian history.

The prestige of Bhim Deo suffered severely as a result of his defeat by the Chauhans, and disorders and attempts to overthrow the government broke out in the hitherto peaceful kingdom of Anhilvara.

That Bhim Deo was eventually able to quell these dangers was entirely due to the support of a powerful feudatory named Lavanaprasada Baghela, who was related to the royal house.

By accepting his assistance Bhim Deo had forfeited all except the nominal sovereignty, all authority resting now in the hands of Lavanaprasada, who held the office of Prime Minister of the kingdom.

In addition to this, Bhim Deo, who was intensely superstitious, having dreamt that Kumarpal had appeared to him, and had commanded him to nominate the son of his minister, Viradhavala by name, as his heir, did so immediately with all the ceremonial customary on such occasions.

War in Central India.

At this time Central India was in the throes of a terrible war between the Chauhans of Sambhar and the Chandels of Mahoba.

In 1182 Prithvi Raj, the youthful Prince of Sambhar, having heard glowing accounts of the beauty of the daughter of his neighbour the Raja of Sameta, sent an envoy to proffer his suit for her hand.

The ruler of Sameta, who had been at enmity with the Chauhans previous to this, instead of welcoming this offer as a means of bringing the feud to an end, refused it unhesitatingly.

Prithvi Raj lost no time in retaliating for this deadly insult, and promptly attacked Sameta, defeated his forces, and abducted the princess, whom he carried to his capital at Ajmere, leaving behind a small body of devoted vassals, who swore to protect the retirement of the prince and his bride.

This gallant rear-guard remained faithful to their undertaking, but when the necessity for holding out came to an end, and they were able to retire, they were obliged to leave many of their wounded on the field. These were found by a body of clansmen of Parmal, the reigning Chandel ruler of Mahoba, who, having ever been hostile to the house of Sambhar, gave orders that they should be brutally put to death.

In spite of the almost unchallenged power of the Chandels, Prithvi Raj solemnly vowed that he would not rest until his brave followers had been avenged. Having assured the safety of his bride at Ajmere, he gathered his army and marched upon Mahoba.

Parmal and his troops awaited the Chauhan assault on the banks of the river Pahouj, not far from the present city of Datiya.

It is typical of the complex character of Prithvi Raj, in which recklessness and chivalry were so strangely mingled, that, on hearing that his enemy was awaiting reinforcements from his principal vassals, Alha, chief of Kalanjar and his brother Udan, he granted him a week's truce to allow of their arrival.

On the expiration of this truce, the battle between the opposing armies immediately commenced. A terrible struggle ensued, during which prodigies of valour were performed on both sides, but the leadership was very unequal for, in spite of his inherent cruelty, Parmal lacked the bravery which inspires an army, whereas his opponent was not only a brilliant general, but because of his total disregard of all personal danger, had already become an object of worship to his clansmen.

Assailed from all sides by the enemy arrows, Prithvi Raj and his followers crossed the Pahouj, and pursued the defeated army to within the walls of Mahoba, where the Prince of Sambhar dictated the terms of peace to the Chandel monarch.

The incessant feuds between the Rajput states, though occasionally resulting in the aggrandisement of individual kingdoms, could only have a weakening effect upon the Hindu state system as a whole, thereby paving the way for the advance from Afghanistan of an enemy more formidable even than Mahmud of Ghazni.

Decline of the Ghaznavid dynasty, and rise of the House of Ghor.

Modud, who had suffered so severely at the hands of Bisal Deo Chauhan, died in 1049, and from that time, excepting during the reigns of Ibrahim (1058–1098) and Masa'ud III

(1098–1118), when the situation temporarily improved, the authority of the house of Ghazni was slowly but surely declining. Among the turbulent mountaineers of the Ghor district of Afghanistan, situated between the highlands east of Herat and reaching to the Upper Helmand Valley, a new dynasty had risen to power which claimed descent from the semi-mythical Persian king Zohak, and soon came into conflict with the older line of Ghazni.

Both Kutub-ud-Din, the first of the Sultans of Ghor, and Saif-ud-Din his successor, were treacherously murdered by Bahram of Ghazni, son of Masa'ud III., but the surviving brother Ala-ud-Din avenged these crimes by marching on Ghazni in the year 1152 and taking the city by assault.

In his thirst for revenge, he ordered his troops to raze to the ground the magnificent colleges erected by Mahmud and the beautiful mosque known as " the Celestial Bride ", and so great was the destruction wrought by Ala-ud-Din, that he was ever afterwards known as Jehan-soz, or " Burner of the World ".

The defeated ruler of Ghazni fled towards India, but died before reaching Lahore and was succeeded by his son Khusru.

The territories of the house of Ghazni were now reduced to the Indian dominions only, but these also were soon to be wrested from the feeble hands of the great Mahmud's successors.

Khusru died in 1160 and the throne descended to his son Khusru Malik, destined to be the last of his line.

On the death of Ala-ud-Din, his nephew Ghiyas-ud-Din ascended the throne of Ghor, associating with himself in the government his younger brother Shahab-ud-Din.

The latter prince, unlike most younger brothers in the primitive Moslem states of Central Asia, had no desire to supplant the reigning sovereign. He placed the whole of his brilliant gifts as a soldier and statesman at the disposal of his brother with a view to extending the supremacy of his house over the Ghaznavid possessions in India.

In 1180 he succeeded in attaining his ambition by a combination of force and stratagem characteristic of his methods.

Khusru Malik had been forced to send his son as a hostage to the court of Ghor, and at this period he was greatly rejoiced at receiving a letter from Shahab-ud-Din telling him that he was returning his son to him as the bearer of proposals for an honourable peace.

Totally unsuspecting, Khusru Malik, attended by a small

escort, went north to meet his son, only to find himself surrounded at his first halting-place by 20,000 Ghor cavalry, commanded by Shahab-ud-Din in person. He was taken prisoner and placed under a strong guard, whilst Shahab-ud-Din, at the head of the main body of his horsemen, entered Lahore unopposed and formally annexed the whole of the Ghaznavid dominions in India in his brother's name.

Thus the great house of Ghazni came to an end, an event not only of deepest significance for the history of Central Asia, but one which also sounded the knell for the whole of Hindu India.

CHAPTER III

THE PASSING OF AN EMPIRE, A.D. 1186–1194

Dissensions of the Hindu kingdoms.

As we briefly mentioned in our first chapter, the kingdom of Delhi was founded in the year 993 by Anangpal Tuar,[1] whose dynasty, by virtue of descent from the Pandavas, claimed to be Lords Paramount of India.

Despite their illustrious origin, the position of the Tuar emperors was in no sense as great as that of the Mauryas or the Guptas. It bore, in point of fact, far greater similarity to that of some of the weaker mediæval Holy Roman Emperors, who, while theoretically exercising absolute power, were actually almost entirely dependent on the support of ambitious vassals of questionable loyalty, such as the kings of Bohemia and the Rhenish archbishops.

The Chalukya sovereigns of Gujarat, especially, were as hostile to the supremacy of the kings of Delhi as their kinsmen in the Deccan had been to that of Harsha.

Rathor dynasty of Kanauj.

The first serious threatening of the imperial dignity of the Tuar princes occurred in the year 1090 when a new Rajput dynasty, that of the Rathors,[2] succeeded the Pratihara line in the neighbouring kingdom of Kanauj.

[1] The founder of the Tuar dynasty was, according to Tod (*Rajasthan*, vol. i. chap. v. p. 207), prior to his establishment at Delhi, merely a minor chieftain. His name was Bilandeo and it was not until he had assumed the imperial dignity that he called himself Anangpal, derived from Ananga, one of the names of Kama, the Hindu Cupid. This name was always included in the dynastic title of each successive Tuar monarch, but only Anangpal I. and the last sovereign of the dynasty were actually called by it.

[2] Though some of their tribal bards declare the Rathors to be of Solar descent, a more reliable tradition ascribes their origin to Yavanaswa, Prince of Parlipur, a chieftain of the Asi, one of the Scythian tribes which invaded India after the fall of the Indo-Bactrian kingdoms, and was afterwards admitted into the Hindu caste system as a Kshatrya class.

Under this dynasty Kanauj became one of the greatest powers of Northern India, and the capital rose once more to the magnificence of the days of Harsha.

During the reign of Bijaipal, the fourth sovereign of that dynasty, the Rathor dominions included the sacred city of Benares, and the entire territory of Oudh, and, with its vassal states, extended from the Ganges to the Narbada.

The territories of Anangpal II., the reigning Tuar sovereign of Delhi, twentieth of his line, who had ascended the imperial throne in 1162, were smaller in dimension than those of the Rathor king, whose position was still further strengthened by his alliance with Bhim Deo II. of Anhilvara.

The existence of this alliance, coupled with the admitted determination of Bijaipal to wrest the imperial sceptre from the Tuars, decided Anangpal to seek the support of Somesvara Chauhan of Sambhar, who was at feud both with the Rathors and the Chalukyas.

The difficulties which faced Anangpal were greatly augmented by the fact that possessing only two daughters and no son, he was, in accordance with the Hindu custom, obliged to nominate and adopt an heir to succeed him on the throne.

Marriages between the Rajput reigning houses have often been the diplomatic way in which long-standing feuds have been settled ; and, with this end in view, Anangpal decided to attempt to bring about the marriage of his two daughters, one to the King of Kanauj, and the other to the Rao of Sambhar.

The elder princess became the consort of Bijaipal, whilst the hand of the younger and favourite daughter, Ruka Bai, was bestowed upon Somesvara Chauhan.

The hopes for future peace upon which Anangpal had

Positive knowledge in regard to the Rathors is impossible, the difficulty being still further increased by the fact that the monarchs of Kanauj, styled Rathors in the poems of Chand, appear as members of the Gahawar clan in inscriptions on temple walls ; the same dynastic name is used also on brass tablets which record grants of land to their subjects. The most likely solution is that Gahawar was the original name of the tribe and was afterwards changed to Rathor, just as that of the ruling clan of Mewar was changed by them from Gehlote to Sesodia.

In point of territory the Rathors are to-day by far the most powerful of the Rajput clans as, in addition to the parent state of Jodhpur, no fewer than four others, Bikanir and Kishengarh in Rajputana, Ratlam in Malwa and Idar in Gujarat are ruled over by Rathor princes.

built as a result of these alliances were, however, doomed to utter failure ; the marriages of the two princesses were in point of fact the prelude to a feud which eventually brought the entire edifice of Hindu power in Northern India crashing to the ground.

Both queens in due course bore heirs to their lords.

The son of the Queen of Kanauj was given the name of Jaichand, while the son of Ruka Bai was named Prithvi Raj[1] and eventually became the conqueror of Mahoba, whose earlier career we have previously described.

From the moment of the infant's birth, Anangpal's heart was especially drawn to his favourite daughter's child, and, when Prithvi Raj had attained the age of eight years, his grandfather summoned him to Delhi, where, with all the customary rites and in the presence of the entire court, he was solemnly adopted as heir to the imperial throne.

From that time onward the young prince was an object of ever-increasing pride and affection to his grandfather, and when in the year 1182 he made his entry into the imperial city fresh from his victory at Mahoba, Anangpal, then of great age, abdicated in his favour and proclaimed him Emperor of Hindustan.

With his accession to the throne of Delhi, Prithvi Raj attained the zenith of his fame. Head of the Chauhan clan by birth and of the Tuar by adoption, no less than 108 vassal chieftains owed him allegiance, and by bringing about a marriage between his sister Pirtha, to whom he was deeply attached, to Samarsi, the reigning Sesodia monarch of Mewar, he also gained the affection and support of that ruler.

The only cloud now remaining on the horizon was the jealous and unrelenting hatred of Jaichand, who had meanwhile succeeded his father Bijaipal on the throne of Kanauj,

[1] *The Maternal Ancestry of Prithvi Raj.*—I have here taken as my authority the *Prithviraj Raisa*, the great biographical epic of Chand Bardai, which distinctly states that Prithvi Raj was the son of Ruka Bai, daughter of Anangpal Tuar.

The late Mr. Vincent Smith, on the authority of the *Prithviraj Vijaya*, another poetic biography hailing from Kashmir, disputes this, declaring the mother of the Emperor to have been a princess of Chedi. It seems very unlikely, however, that Chand, whose poem is entirely devoted to every detail of his master's life, from his birth to his death, could have been guilty of such a mistake. We can therefore assume that the confusion was due to the fact that Prithvi Raj's father Somesvara had two wives, one of whom was a princess of Chedi.

Compare Tod's *Rajasthan*, vol. ii. p. 365, and Vincent Smith's *Early History of India*, chapter xiv. pp. 387-8.

and who had sought to strengthen his position by a treaty of alliance with Bhim Deo of Anhilvara, the slayer of Somesvara, father to the Emperor Prithvi Raj.

The Emperor, however, was strengthened in his desire to live at peace with his cousin by the wise counsel of his brother-in-law Samarsi, who, even at that early stage, foresaw the danger which would accrue to all Hindu states from the growing power of the House of Ghor.

Following the advice of Samarsi, coupled with that of his other most trusted friend Chand Bardai, the hereditary chief bard of the Chauhan clan, Prithvi Raj determined to make a final effort at reconciliation with Jaichand by paying him a ceremonial visit at Kanauj, hoping by this courtesy to bring about a change from the Rathor king's hostile attitude to one of friendly allegiance.

This attempt was destined to fail. Jaichand, who combined great ability with unbounded arrogance and ambition, had grown up with feelings of hatred against the Chauhan clan and considered that Anangpal had cheated him of his birthright by selecting his younger grandson as heir to the imperial throne. Nothing could deter him from his fixed resolve to drive his cousin from the territories of Delhi and to establish himself as suzerain of India. Chance favoured his aims. The but thinly veiled hostility with which Jaichand received the overtures of Prithvi Raj was not shared by his daughter Sangagota, who looked upon the young Emperor with very different eyes.

At the period of which we are writing the restrictions upon the freedom of women, which the epoch of Moslem rule brought to the greater part of Hindustan, did not exist. Hindu society and life generally at the great Hindu courts of these earlier days was based upon the ideals of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, and the purdah and the veil were as yet unknown. Men and women met freely on all public occasions, and one of the most impressive and gorgeous ceremonies was that of the "Swaimvara" or Bride's Choice, at which the high-born Kshatrya maiden chose her future husband from amongst the assembled princes and nobles by throwing the *burmala* or marriage garland round the neck of the favoured suitor.

Sangagota was a true daughter of her race. Endowed with great beauty and brought up to a full understanding of the high ideals of the ancient epics, she combined the gentleness, dauntless courage and unfailing fidelity so typical of the national heroines, Sita, Draupadi and Damayanti.

The story of Prithvi Raj's campaign against Mahoba had penetrated throughout Northern India and, to the romantic mind of the youthful Rajputni, the man who had succeeded in overthrowing a great kingdom solely to avenge the murder of his humble followers appeared as the prototype of that mighty Pandava Emperor Yudhisthira, from whom, on the maternal side, he was descended.[1]

From the moment of their first meeting the young princess and the Emperor conceived for each other a passion so overwhelming as to make them totally impervious to the deadly feud which existed between the dynasties of Delhi and of Kanauj ; or it may be possible that the generous spirit of Prithvi Raj believed it to be within his power to conciliate Jaichand by his love for his daughter.

The monarch of Kanauj was fully alive to the devotion which Sangagota had inspired in the young Emperor, but he ignored the fact that this love was returned, nor did he realise that beneath the gentle and submissive bearing of his daughter lay hidden a spirit and determination which, if roused to action, were equal to his own.

Prithvi Raj's infatuation for Sangagota appeared to her father to afford the best means by which to humiliate him. In order to understand his train of thought, it is necessary here to refer to an ancient Hindu religious rite, known as the *Rajasuya* or Royal Sacrifice. The only person entitled to perform this rite was a prince who laid claim to the position of Lord Paramount of India, and this prince could be assisted in its celebration only by reigning sovereigns who, in virtue of their attendance, acknowledged themselves his vassals.

In furtherance of his plot, Jaichand in the year 1184 formally announced his intention of performing this ceremony and of coupling with it the " Swaimvara " or Bride's Choice of Sangagota. Prithvi Raj fully realised that his enemy had set him a snare and that he would be forfeiting his suzerainty over India by appearing at this combined celebration. The ruler of Kanauj underestimated both the resourcefulness of the young Emperor, and the devotion of Sangagota for her lover. Prithvi Raj determined not only to gain his heart's desire, but also to put a definite end to

[1] One of the most beautiful, and at the same time most human, incidents of the Mahabharata is that which describes the great Emperor Yudhisthira's summons by Indra, King of Heaven, " to be translated living to Paradise ", and his refusal unless his faithful dog (by the Hindus considered an unclean animal) is permitted to join him.

Jaichand's bid for supremacy ; had he shown any inclination to humble himself in order to win her hand, Sangagota would have turned from him in contempt.

He replied to the King of Kanauj's summons by a defiant refusal, but it seemed probable that the bearer of this message to Jaichand also conveyed one to his daughter, which determined her future actions.

The *Rajasuya* was celebrated by Jaichand with almost unprecedented magnificence, and was immediately followed by the *Swaimvara*, which took place outside the walls of the city in a pavilion, both sides of which were open.

Judging from the account given by the graphic pen of Chand Bardai in his great epic in blank verse, entitled the *Prithviraj Raisa*, the scene must have been one of unparalleled splendour.

Amongst the royal aspirants to the hand of Sangagota were Bhim Deo Chalukya of Anhilvara Patan, the Pramara Raja of Malwa, and line upon line of princes and nobles belonging to the most ancient houses of Hindustan.

Two only of the reigning sovereigns of Northern India were conspicuous by their absence from this gorgeous assembly, the young Chauhan Emperor and his brother-in-law Samarsi of Mewar, the heir of Rama.

Jaichand's fury at the complete failure of his scheme was intense and he sought to give expression to it by having a grotesquely fashioned golden image of Prithvi Raj placed at the farther end of the pavilion reserved for the lowest of the tributary princelings.

The supreme and fateful moment for the young princess had now arrived. The *purohita* (family priest), having chanted the bridal *mantra* or hymn, Sangagota, robed in her bridal attire, entered the pavilion, carrying the *burmala* in her hand.

With head erect she passed through the throng of assembled princes down to the lowest end of the hall to the spot where the image of Prithvi Raj confronted her, where without one moment's hesitation she flung the *burmala* round the neck of the image, proclaiming loudly, " My chosen lord ".

Hardly had the words left her lips than an answering cry, " Jai Prithvi Raj ki Jai ! " (Victory to Prithvi Raj) was raised by a small band of horsemen who had apparently been watching the ceremony from outside the pavilion. Closing their ranks this diminutive troop of cavalry charged into the pavilion, cutting down the few guards on duty at the

entrance, who, completely bewildered by the attack, were only able to make the feeblest attempt to bar the entry.

As the cloak of the leader fell from his shoulders, the Emperor stood revealed clad in his shining armour, and close behind rode Pujan Kachwaha of Amber, the greatest of his vassals, followed by sixty of the leading nobles of the Delhi court.

All this brilliant retinue had, before starting on this perilous adventure, taken an oath on the water of the sacred Ganges to assist their prince in gaining his bride, or to perish in the attempt. With one wild dash, and in full view of the astounded spectators, Prithvi Raj seized Sangagota, swung her on to his saddle bow, and, immediately turning his charger's head, galloped at mad speed towards Delhi, followed by his gallant escort.

Jaichand instantly sent his cavalry in pursuit of the fugitives, but all efforts at overtaking them proved of no avail. They reached the frontier of Delhi in safety, to find the entire army of the Emperor in readiness to defend them.

This immediately brought about a state of war between Delhi and Kanauj, and Jaichand, at the head of his forces, marched to the frontier. A fierce battle ensued and continued for five days, during which Sangagota herself donned armour and fought at her husband's side. The conflict ended with the complete defeat of Jaichand and his army, and Prithvi Raj and his bride made their triumphant state entry into Delhi.

Jaichand was obliged, in spite of the bitterness of his resentment, to conform to the customary practice and to send wedding gifts to his daughter, but his hatred of the man who had so entirely gained the mastery over him was such that he determined to make a fresh attempt to overthrow his power.

Alliance of Kanauj and Ghor.

Blind to all but his desire for revenge against the Chauhans, blind even to the peril accruing from his action not only to the kingdom of Prithvi Raj but to the whole future of Hindu rule, culture and civilisation in India, Jaichand despatched envoys to Shahab-ud-Din Ghori at Lahore seeking an alliance with him against Delhi. The continued feuds between the different Northern and Central Indian Hindu states had not escaped the watchful eye of the ruler of Ghor, who, realising that these repeated conflicts could only produce a weakening effect upon them all, was awaiting the moment propitious to the plan, which had long been

forming in his ambitious mind, of establishing a Mohammedan empire throughout India. He accepted Jaichand's proposals with alacrity, and the allies, uniting their forces, and still further strengthened by contingents from Bhim Deo of Anhilvara and the Pramara Raja of Malwa, advanced towards Delhi. Prithvi Raj was whole-heartedly supported in the struggle by the hereditary vassals of his house and by his brother-in-law, Samarsi of Mewar, who brought all his own feudatories to his assistance.

It was in the year 1191 that the opposing forces first met on the banks of the Caggar river at the village of Talawari, not far from Thanesar.

For three days troops of Rajput and Afghan cavalry charged each other without decisive result, but the Chauhan horsemen failed to break the ranks of the Moslem infantry of Ghor, all of them hardened veterans. Massing his archers, Prithvi Raj commanded them to make a supreme effort to overcome their resistance. A hail of arrows swept the lines of Ghor, and Shahab-ud-Din, ever in the thickest of the fray, fell from his horse severely wounded.

As so often seen in Oriental warfare, the Moslems, believing their leader to be dead, wavered for a brief moment and then broke away utterly, spreading confusion throughout the ranks of their Rajput allies. The cry of "Jai Prithvi Raj ki Jai!" heard in the bridal hall, rang out once more loud and triumphant as the Emperor and the Maharana of Mewar, followed by their entire vassalage, swept forward to the charge.

Panic-stricken, demoralised and utterly beyond the control of their leaders, Jaichand's soldiers and those of his allies flung away their arms, and abandoning their camp and all their equipment, fled from the field of battle. For forty miles the Chauhans and Sesodias pursued their beaten foes, and, in the meantime, messengers were despatched to Sangagota with the eagerly longed-for news of her lord's greatest victory. Prithvi Raj re-entered Delhi amidst the acclamation of his subjects, and the Chauhan maidens greeted the returning heroes with the *suhailea* and *kullas*.[1] But this great victory carried the elements of future danger in its wake, for it had sadly depleted the army of Delhi, and

[1] The *kullas* is a brazen vessel carried on the head by the maidens of a Rajput town or village, as a sign of homage to a returning warrior or to a guest whom it is specially desired to honour, while simultaneously chanting an impromptu *suhailea*, or song of joy in his praise.

although Shahab-ud-Din's troops had also suffered very severely, he alone had actually benefited in this gigantic struggle. Whereas the Rajput kingdoms had been permanently weakened by their losses in war, the ruler of Ghor was able to draw formidable reinforcements from his brother's territories in Afghanistan.

During the whole of the year following upon his defeat, Shahab-ud-Din resided peacefully at the court of his brother Ghiyas-ud-Din at Ghor, after which he proceeded to Ghazni, of which city he was Governor, and there he commenced upon the elaboration of his plan for a final struggle to establish the Crescent of Islam above the Trident of Siva.

He collected an army of 120,000 picked cavalry, and, placing himself at the head of it, advanced to Lahore, the capital of the Indian dominions of his house. From here he despatched an ultimatum to Prithvi Raj offering him his friendship on condition of his accepting Islam, and threatening him with destruction in the event of refusal.

The impression produced by this deadly insult upon the proud chief of the Fire-Born Chauhans and his answer can be imagined, and, in making this demand it is almost certain that Shahab-ud-Din neither believed in, nor desired its acceptance.

Wasting no time in further negotiation, he promptly invaded the territories of Delhi. Had the numerous Rajput princes buried their feuds and united in face of the common peril, Shahab-ud-Din's bold venture would most probably have ended disastrously for him. Blind, however, to the menace threatening Rajput supremacy, Bhim Deo of Anhilvara and Jaichand of Kanauj held aloof from the struggle, leaving Prithvi Raj and the ever-faithful Samarsi of Mewar to bear the full brunt of the invasion.

Accompanied by his consort Queen Pirtha, and attended by all the great vassals of his house, the Maharana of Mewar left Chitor for Delhi, there to join forces with his brother-in-law.

Prithvi Raj, usually so calm and resolute, was assailed by doubts for the future, and fears for the safety of the woman for whose sake he had risked his empire. On the eve of his departure for the campaign, he sought the presence of Sangagota and implored her to decide whether he should personally lead his army to battle or remain at her side to guard her from possible danger, leaving the supreme command to some trusted adherent. The unhesitating reply of Sangagota to her lord's impassioned appeal is immortalised

by Chand Bardai in his great historical epic,[1] and the farewell interview between husband and wife can be counted as one of its most romantic episodes. " O Sun of the Chauhans ", she exclaims, " none has drunk so deeply both of glory and of pleasure as thou; life is like an old garment, what matters it if we throw it off, for to die well is life immortal. I am thine other self; whether here on earth or in Swarga (heaven) we twain shall be as one, so think neither of thyself nor of me, but go, and let thy sword strike down the foes of Hind."

Sangagota unfalteringly helps Prithvi Raj to fasten on his armour, and with firm hands buckles on his sword, betraying no sign of weakness even in the final embrace. It is only when her husband has vanished from her sight that her fortitude gives way, and amidst passionate weeping she cries out to her attendants, "I may see him again in the mansions of Surya, but never more in Yoginipur ".[2]

Prithvi Raj and his ally Samarsi awaited Shahab-ud-Din's attack at Talawari, the scene of their previous victory, rightly holding that the recollection of this, and the fact that Talawari is situated in the heart of the traditional battle-field of the Mahabharata, would encourage their troops to make a supreme effort.

The enemy armies spent the night before the battle in a manner typical of their respective mentalities and creeds—the Hindu in feasting whilst listening to the chants of the bards telling of the glories of the past; the Moslems in counting their beads and praying for the destruction of the idolaters.

The battle commenced at daybreak. The Rajput cavalry under the command of their leaders performed, as always, prodigies of valour; the weakness of the Hindu army lay in its infantry, which was composed for the most part of raw levies raised since the last campaign.

This inferiority was known to Shahab-ud-Din, and he promptly detached a force of his finest cavalry from the main body of his army with the command to charge the " paiks ", or foot soldiers, who had been placed in the centre of the Hindu line.

[1] Chand Bardai fell fighting beside his master in the final combat, but his poem, of which he had composed 5000 verses, was completed by his descendants. Some of these descendants still exist and reside in the Jodhpur state on the very lands granted to their famous ancestor by Prithvi Raj. Thus, strange to relate, the descendants of the chief bard and most faithful friend of the Chauhan emperor dwell under the protection of the heirs of Jaichand of Kanauj, his bitterest foe.

[2] An ancient name for Delhi.

Harassed by the repeated attacks of the Moslem horsemen, the Hindu infantry began to waver, and Shahab-ud-Din, quick to notice these signs of weakness, placed himself at the head of a specially selected force of 12,000 cavalry clad in mail, and charged full into their ranks.

At this violent onslaught a panic ensued amongst the paiks, who broke their ranks and, flinging away their arms, sought shelter behind their own still undefeated cavalry.

This action on the part of the foot soldiers jeopardised the freedom of movement of the horsemen, and placed them at the mercy of the massed attacks of their assailants.

In the words of a Moslem historian, "Like a great building the Hindu army tottered to its fall and was lost in its own ruins".[1] Samarsi of Mewar, his son Kalian Rai and practically all the most prominent vassals of his house fell in battle, fighting heroically to the last, and about 13,000 of the Sesodia household troops shared their fate.

Hamir Hara of Hansi, chief of the Hara branch of the Chauhans, and a faithful little band tried to protect Prithvi Raj, but were speedily overcome by weight of numbers, and the Emperor, his sword wrenched from his hand, was taken prisoner and brought into the presence of Shahab-ud-Din.

The calm dignity typical of his race never forsook the fallen sovereign in the presence of the conqueror, but Shahab-ud-Din's heart knew neither chivalry nor pity, and within sight of the entire Moslem army and on the very spot which but a brief year earlier had been the scene of his greatest victory, the head of Prithvi Raj was severed from his body.

Thus perished one of the most attractive and romantic figures in the entire history of India. Handsome in person, endowed with versatile and brilliant gifts, soldier and lover, Prithvi Raj is the hero of the devoted Chand Bardai's stirring verse, which constitutes the greatest epic of mediæval Hindustan, and which is still counted amongst the favourite literature of the Rajputs, both of Rajputana and of the Upper Gangetic valley.

The arrival in Delhi of the news of the disastrous result of the battle brought with it the final act of the tragedy.

Sangagota, clad in her bridal robes, her sister-in-law Pirtha, the Maharani of Mewar, and the wives of all the fallen vassals of Delhi and Mewar mounted a great funeral pyre which had been erected outside the walls of the city and sought death in the flames; with them perished a few

[1] Ferishta.

devoted slave girls who had sworn to share the fate of their mistresses.

From the battlefield of Talawari, the Afghans pressed on to Ajmere, which had been the original capital of the Chauhans before Prithvi Raj became Emperor. The city was plundered by the savage Moslem troops and then handed over to an illegitimate son of Prithvi Raj, who made a vow to hold it as the vassal of Shahab-ud-Din.

The ruler of Ghor then returned to Afghanistan carrying with him into slavery half the population of Ajmere. The occupation of Delhi was left to one of his trusted officers, the subsequently famous Kutub-ud-Din Aibak.

The Moslem general recognised that any delay in completing the conquest of the country might lead to a revival of Hindu resistance, and he therefore immediately advanced to the gates of the city.

Prince Rainsi, son of Prithvi Raj by his first marriage to a daughter of the Dahima Rajput Prince of Biana, was in command of the small garrison left at the capital, and met the Afghan forces at the head of his followers, all being clad in the robes of saffron meant to denote that they valued life no longer and were determined to die fighting, and every one of this small band of heroes fell in the combat which ensued.

Fall of the Hindu Empire.

Kutub-ud-Din entered Delhi in triumph, and from that moment onwards the Moslem call to prayer re-echoed through the desecrated Hindu shrines of the ancient capital of the Pandavas.

Jaichand, in achieving his revenge and overthrowing his hated rival, had also brought about the death of his daughter and indirectly his own and his country's ruin.

In 1194, Shahab-ud-Din returned to India at the head of a fresh army, and joining forces with Kutub-ud-Din, they turned at once against the ruler of Kanauj.

Jaichand's resources were still very great, and heading a formidable army, he met the Afghan hordes at Chandawar between the Ganges and the Jumna.

The Moslems, flushed with their recent victories and upheld by their fierce religious zeal, proved too formidable even for the great strength of their opponents. The army of the Rathors was utterly broken, and Jaichand and all his principal chiefs were driven over the river bank and perished in the waters of the Jumna.

Fall of Kanauj.

Of the direct descendants of the monarch of Kanauj only two grandsons, Seoji and Saitram by name, survived, and these, too proud to bow the knee to the conqueror, fled to the

desert of Marwar, " the Region of Death ", followed by about two hundred clansmen. Here, imbued by the indomitable courage and strength of purpose of the Rajput, they gradually built up a state, which long afterwards, under the name of Marwar or Jodhpur, was destined to play a great part in the subsequent history of India. New Rathor state founded in Marwar.

Jaichand and his army having disappeared, the whole of North-western and Central India was at the mercy of Shahab-ud-Din. Kanauj was sacked by the invaders, who then swept on to the holy city of Benares, the religious centre of Hinduism.

The ancient shrines of Kasi, " The Splendid ", which had remained untouched even in the days of Mahmud the Image Breaker, were now subjected to desecration, and in the characteristic wording of a contemporary[1] Moslem authority, " converted into mosques and the abodes of goodness, and the very name of idolatry annihilated ".

The tragic love story of Prithvi Raj and Sangagota spelt the doom of the Hindu empire in India, just as the fatal passion of Antony and Cleopatra brought ruin to the Egypt of the Pharaohs.

The imperial city of Delhi now changed its character, becoming essentially Moslem in architecture, ideals and religion ; and the call of the muezzin was henceforth heard in place of the chant of the Brahmins.

The Hindus, driven to despair by the abduction from their homes of their women-folk to a life of slavery in the Musulman harems, saw themselves compelled in self-defence to adopt the customs of their conquerors and to conceal their wives and daughters behind the veil and the purdah.

The alien upheaval had as yet not extended to Rajputana, and there and in the Far South the traditions of Hindu nationality and of old Hindu ideals still persisted, and, though sometimes threatened, never really ceased to exist.

[1] The actual quotation is a description of the events following the capture of Kalanjar by Kutub-ud-Din a few years subsequent to the events recorded in this chapter, but the scenes of pillage and destruction took place also at Benares and in every Hindu city which fell to the arms of Shahab-ud-Din.

Taj-ul-Maasir, Elliott, *History of India, as told by its own Historians*, vol. ii. p. 231.

CHAPTER IV

THE SLAVE KINGS OF DELHI, A.D. 1194–1288

Kutub-ud-Din appointed Viceroy at Delhi.

AFTER his victory over Jaichand of Kanauj, Shahab-ud-Din returned to Ghazni, but before doing so he created his trusted general Kutub-ud-Din Viceroy over the whole of the conquered territories, installing him at Delhi, which henceforth became the seat of the Musulman power in India.

Born in Turkestan of obscure parentage, the new Viceroy, who later on developed such remarkable talents, began life as a slave in the service of a Kazi or Mohammedan judge, who had sold him to Shahab-ud-Din.

The ruler of Ghor was quick to notice the brilliant military gifts of the young slave, and these, coupled with his unswerving devotion to his master, soon won him his complete confidence. In a short time Kutub-ud-Din became Shahab-ud-Din's most trusted adviser.

Once installed as Viceroy, Kutub-ud-Din began to dream of a further expansion of Mohammedan rule in India.

Condition of India.

At this juncture it is necessary to review briefly the condition in which India found itself immediately after the battles of Talawari and Chandawar.

Of the three great Hindu kingdoms of the North, two, Delhi and Kanauj, had been completely overthrown and their territories annexed ; the third, Mewar, though its ruler and most of his leading vassals had fallen, still retained its entire independence.

In Western India the great Chalukya kingdom of Anhilvara Patan, which had preserved its neutrality during the wars of Shahab-ud-Din against Delhi and Kanauj, remained untouched, but owing to attacks by Bhillama, a chieftain of the Yadava or Yadu clan, the parent Chalukya house, that of the Deccan, had fallen upon evil days.

In 1190 the last Chalukya king, Somesvara IV., had lost his kingdom to Bhillama, hitherto his feudatory, who

established himself at the foot of the rock fortress of Devagiri,[1] which became his capital.

Hoysala dynasty of Mysore.

In Southern India, as far back as 1111, a new dynasty, that of the Hoysala-Ballalas, had risen to power on the table-land of Mysore and had rapidly become the most important state in that part of the country.

During the reign of Vira Ballala, of the house of Hoysala (1173–1220), the greatest of his line, the house of the Chalukyas having fallen, the whole of the Southern Deccan passed under his rule.

We must now turn our attention to Eastern India, which we have but briefly noticed since dealing with the mediæval history of the peninsula.

Bihar, the last Buddhist kingdom.

In Bihar the powerful Buddhist house of the Palas had, but for two temporarily successful attacks, one by the hill tribe of the Kambojas, the other by the Northern Bengal tribe of the Chasi-Kaivartas, maintained itself in power for the almost unexampled period of four hundred years.

Thus the ancient Magadha kingdom, alone amongst the vast number of Indian states which Asoka had brought into the Buddhist fold, remained true to the faith of Gautama. In her monasteries pious monks still taught the Eightfold Path to Nirvana, and her ecclesiastical universities were still thronged with eager students of the Little Vehicle of Pataliputra.

Hindu revival in Bengal. Foundation of Sena kingdom.

In direct contradiction, the neighbouring province of Bengal was then in the throes of a complete Hindu revival. This reaction reached its climax in 1119, when a chieftain named Vijayasena headed a successful revolution against the Pala dynasty, seized the throne of Bengal and founded the Hindu line of the Senas.

Under this monarch and his son Vallala Sena, or Ballal Sen (1158–1170), Bengal became a stronghold of the Tantric form of Hinduism. This sect pays special devotion to the feminine element in nature, and survives to the present day in the fact that the Goddess Kali is the tutelary deity of that province.

Ballal Sen was succeeded by his son Lakshman Sen, a poet and man of high culture. At his court at Nudia in the Upper Delta of the Ganges there dwelt the famous bard Jayadeva, author of the *Gita Govinda* or *Songs of Govinda*, the celebrated mystical love poem, which deals with the story of Krishna and Radha.

At this period Indradyumnapala, the Pala king, was

[1] Later named by the Moslems Daulatabad.

Chola domination in the south.

reigning in the neighbouring country of Bihar. In the extreme south of the peninsula the three ancient dynasties of the Pandyas, Cholas and Cheras still reigned over their respective kingdoms, but a succession of strong, able and ambitious rulers made the Cholas practically the Lords Paramount of the Tamil countries and Malabar.

Progress of the Musulmans. Revolt of Hari Raj.

We will now again turn our attention to the further progress of the Moslem invaders. In overthrowing the Chauhan empire of Delhi, Shahab-ud-Din Ghori had not crushed the proud spirit of the Chauhan clan, and no sooner had the conqueror returned to Afghanistan than a revolt broke out at Ajmere, headed by a chieftain named Hari Raj.

The puppet Raja whom the Mohammedans had set upon the throne was compelled to flee from the city and to seek the assistance of Kutub-ud-Din, Shahab-ud-Din's Viceroy. Kutub-ud-Din was fully alive to the danger of a successful uprising, which would in all probability have shaken the newly established Musulman empire, surrounded as it was by enemies, to its very foundations. He therefore lost no time in responding to the call for help, and placing himself at the head of his troops, marched against the rebels.

Hari Raj's bold attempt to liberate his country ended with his defeat and death in battle, and the Raja was reinstalled on his throne with a Musulman official and garrison to control and support him.

This marks the final bid on the part of the Chauhans for Ajmere, and their leadership now passed to the Hara branch of their house, which was to maintain worthily first at Aser, and then at Bundi and Kotah, the finest traditions of the most renowned of the Agnikula clans.

In 1195 Shahab-ud-Din succeeded his brother Ghiyas-ud-Din on the throne of Ghor, and in the following year, with the Viceroy Kutub-ud-Din acting as his second in command, he placed himself at the head of his army and proceeded to Central India.

With the generosity so characteristic of his nature, Prithvi Raj, after his conquest of Mahoba in 1182, had not deprived Parmal of his throne, but had been content to leave one of his own vassals in the Chandel capital, the previously mentioned Pujan Kachwaha of Amber, to watch over and control the movements of the defeated monarch.

Prithvi Raj now, to use the poetic words of Chand, "lay asleep on the banks of the Caggar in the wave of the steel", but Parmal, the unworthy scion of a great line, still ruled in Mahoba.

Amongst the most important possessions of his house was that famous and oft-disputed fortress, the Rock of Gwalior, known as "The Key of Hindustan", and the next goal of the Musulman army was to conquer and occupy this.

After storming Biana, the capital of the Dahima Rajputs, Shahab-ud-Din returned to Afghanistan, leaving his general to march his troops on Gwalior. The summons sent by the Moslems to the feudatory chief of Gwalior to surrender was met by a defiant refusal, he believing himself to be utterly secure on his hitherto impregnable rock. Finally, however, after a protracted siege, he was forced, though he still occupied the rock, to acknowledge the suzerainty of the house of Ghor.

Indecisive campaign in Gujarat.

Having gained his objective in Central India, Kutub-ud-Din led his army towards Gujarat. This vast Chalukya kingdom had, in spite of the general upheaval, remained neutral, and consequently still preserved its power and abundant resources.

Invasion of Mewar.

Kutub-ud-Din succeeded in capturing and temporarily occupying the capital, Anhilvara, but, finding himself surrounded by enemies and acting upon orders from Ghazni, he finally evacuated the country and withdrew northwards with the object of attacking Mewar, the only Rajput kingdom of first rank remaining in Northern India.

We have mentioned that after the death of the Maharana Samarsi in the great battle, one of his two queens, Pirtha, Prithvi Raj's sister, became *sati*. The other consort, Korumdevi Chalukya, a princess of Anhilvara Patan, did not follow her example, because, having a son, she desired to act as regent for the child during his minority.

Mewar, the leading Rajput state.

By the fall of the Chauhan empire, the leadership of the Rajput clans had passed to the house of Rama, and thus all Rajput hopes were centred upon this child Karan, "The Radiant".

As soon as the news of the impending Afghan attack reached Chitor, the Rani summoned her vassals to her assistance. Their ranks had, however, been sadly depleted since the fall of Delhi and only twenty chiefs remained to answer her call. In the great hall of audience at Chitor, each chief bowed his head for the youthful prince to place his hands upon it, and each in turn solemnly vowed to uphold the child and his mother and to defend the entrance to Chitor from the Moslems as long as life endured.

The Queen placed herself at the head of the gallant little

band of followers and led them to battle against the formidable army of their opponents.

It was in the neighbourhood of Amber that the clash of arms came, and then the almost incredible happened. The handful of Rajputs, the cry of "Jai Bhavani!"[1] on their lips, threw themselves upon the enemy with such violence that the Afghan forces were compelled to yield to the onslaught.

Fighting desperately in a vain effort to rally his troops, Kutub-ud-Din was seriously wounded, and, fully believing their leader to be dead, the Afghans gave up the struggle and fled in wild confusion towards Delhi, leaving their entire camp and war material in the hands of the victorious Rajputs.

Thus by her heroic action Korumdevi had saved her child and her country, for the attack was never renewed, and secure in the rock-girt fortress of Chitor, this child first, and then his successors, maintained throughout the centuries the independence and integrity of their race.

Musulman conquest of of Bihar.

Shahab-ud-Din and his Viceroy soon found compensation for their failure in Rajputana by the extension of Musulman rule to Eastern India, and this they owed to a Turki soldier of fortune, one of the most remarkable figures of early Mohammedan India.

This man, Mohammed-ibyn-Bakhtyar by name, had originally entered India with the armies of Ghor, and after the fall of the Rathor monarchy of Kanauj, was granted an estate on the Upper Ganges in what is now known as the district of Mirzapur.

Gathering around him a band of turbulent hot-headed soldiers, he placed himself at their head, and from time to time conducted raids into the neighbouring territory of Bihar, the dominions of the Buddhist Palas.

Indradyumnapala of Bihar seems not to have offered much resistance to these invasions, and encouraged by his attitude, Mohammed-ibyn-Bakhtyar, in the year 1197, conceived the much more formidable plan of permanently conquering the kingdom and adding it to the Musulman empire.

Leaving his main army to follow more slowly, Mohammed, at the head of a small force, advanced, apparently without meeting with any resistance, to within striking distance of the fortified city of Oddantapura or Bihar, the capital of the Pala kingdom.

The Musulman commander, with a party of only two

[1] "Victory to Bhavani"—the tutelary goddess of the Sesodia house.

hundred men, rode up unnoticed to the postern gate of the fortress, which had, with almost incredible negligence, been left entirely undefended. The gates were rushed with the quickness of lightning, and before the garrison could realise what had happened, they were felled to the ground by their savage assailants. Thus the fortified city of Bihar, and with it the great kingdom of the Palas, passed into the power of the Musulmans, and with its passing, Buddhism, of which it had been the last stronghold, ceased to exist as a creed in India.

Merging of Buddhism into the Hindu faith.

Destruction overtook the great university of Nalanda, from whose halls so many famous missionaries had carried the word of the Buddha; the splendid *Viharas*, some dating from the period of Asoka, were most of them razed to the ground, their treasures being plundered and their priceless manuscripts destroyed, and hundreds of the "shaven-headed Brahmins", the Moslem name for the Buddhist monks, met death at their hands. The few survivors fled to Nepal and Tibet, whose Buddhist rulers accorded them protection.

The sword of Mohammed-ibyn-Bakhtyar had destroyed the Buddhist buildings in Magadha, but the actual spirit of the faith owed its effacement to the Brahmins, who, following their usual subtle method of conversion, declared the Buddha to be the ninth Incarnation of Vishnu the Preserver, thus absorbing both him and his faith into the all-embracing system of Puranic Hinduism.

Musulman conquest of Bengal.

Having made satisfactory arrangements for the government of the conquered territory, Mohammed-ibyn-Bakhtyar proceeded northwards to Bundelkhand, where Kutub-ud-Din was in camp, to pay his respects to the Viceroy, and to make over to him the major part of his immense spoil.

Kutub-ud-Din received his adventurous subordinate with high honours and assured him of his unqualified support in the designs he had formed for the further extension of Musulman rule in Eastern India, by the subjugation of the Sena kingdom of Bengal.

With this plan in his mind, Mohammed promptly returned to Bihar and lost no time in strongly reinforcing his army and completing all his preparations; and in the year 1199 he invaded Bengal.

In spite of the fact that only two generations had gone by since Vijayasena had wrested the sovereignty of Bengal from the Palas, the military organisation of the kingdom had fallen into a state of utter neglect. The aged King

Lakshman Sen, though much respected and very popular with his subjects, had apparently devoted the greater part of his time and energy to literary pursuits and to his religious devotions ; this knowledge reaching him, the Moslem commander was encouraged to repeat the adventure of Bihar on an even more daring scale.

His progress across Bengal was absolutely unopposed, and, leaving his army to follow more slowly, Mohammed-ibyn-Bakhtyar, at the head of only eighteen horsemen, rode into the city of Nudia. As even at that early period it was an ordinary occurrence for Musulman horse-dealers to find their way as far as Bengal, the inhabitants believed the small troop of horsemen to be some of these, and allowed them, with Mohammed at their head, to reach the gates of the royal palace unmolested.

Within its walls Lakshman Sen, entirely unsuspicious of danger, was spending a quiet hour attended by the ladies of his household.

The shout of " Din Din Allah el Akbar ! " was raised by the Moslems, as drawing their swords they broke into the palace, slaying the few who attempted to bar their progress. The inner apartments were quickly reached, and at that very moment the aged King, barefoot and totally unprepared for a journey, was attempting to make his escape from a back entrance. His wives and slave girls, all his treasure and his war elephants besides, fell into the hands of Mohammed and his small band, and on the arrival shortly afterwards of the remainder of his army, the city of Nudia was completely occupied.

Lakshman Sen succeeded in escaping first to Bikrampur in Eastern Bengal, but he eventually sought sanctuary in the great temple of Jaganath at Puri in Orissa, and ended his life as a devotee at the shrine of " The Lord of the World ".

Mohammed-ibyn-Bakhtyar's first action was to despatch a portion of the immense booty to Kutub-ud-Din, and then, following the same lines as at Bihar, he ordered his soldiers to raze the city of Nudia to the ground so that all traces of the " infidel " kingdom should be destroyed.

This pitiless command was promptly obeyed, and immediately afterwards the conqueror transferred his headquarters to the city of Lakhnauti or Gaur, one of the most ancient in Bengal. Here his official appointment as Governor of Bengal and Bihar, bestowed by Kutub-ud-Din in the name of his sovereign Shahab-ud-Din, reached him, and, during his governorship, the city of Gaur entirely lost

its Hindu appearance and was transformed into a magnificent Musulman capital endowed with splendid mosques and colleges for the study of the Koran ; and ever since both Bihar and Bengal have taken a prominent place in the history of Mohammedan India.

Kutub-ud-Din did not long rest content with the enormous territories acquired, but, in the year 1203, determined upon the complete subjugation of Bundelkhand. To this end he himself headed an army and marched straight upon the fortress of Kalanjar. But for the stimulating influence of his heroic Queen, Malundevi, who had ever since her marriage been the real power behind the throne, it is more than likely that Parmal of Mahoba, always a craven at heart, would either have shut himself up within the strong walls of Kalanjar, or submitted unresistingly to Kutub-ud-Din.

Inspired by the Queen's courage, he placed himself at the head of his army and gave battle to the Moslems in the open field under the walls of Kalanjar. In the terrific struggle which ensued, the Chandels contested the ground inch by inch, but finally the victory rested with Kutub-ud-Din. Parmal took refuge in the fortress, and, to quote from a contemporary Moslem history, he " placed the collar of subjection round his neck " and swore allegiance to the house of Ghor.

The defeated monarch died, however, before the treaty of peace could be ratified, and his minister, Aj Deo, a man of more resolute character, ordered the gates of Kalanjar to be closed and defied the Moslems to do their worst.

But ill-luck dogged the Hindus and even Nature seemed to conspire against them. A prolonged drought made every well in the fortress useless, and after enduring the agonies of thirst to the utmost, the heroic garrison were, at last, compelled to capitulate. Fifty thousand prisoners fell into the hands of the Mohammedans, who retained them all as slaves in accordance with the merciless custom of the times.

Kutub-ud-Din appointed one of his officers Governor of Kalanjar and then himself occupied the capital, Mahoba, without any further resistance.

Fall of the Chandel kingdom.

The great Rajput dynasty of the Chandels, which had reigned in Bunkelkhand for over three centuries (831–1203) ceased to exist with the fall of the capital; the Chandel clan became scattered far beyond the frontiers of Central India, and their present-day representative, the Raja of Gidhaur, dwells near Mungir in distant Bengal. The Rajput territories in Bundelkhand were annexed to the Ghorian empire

by Kutub-ud-Din, who triumphantly returned to Delhi, laden with the spoils of Mahoba.

The return of the Viceroy to the capital was followed almost immediately by a very serious and quite unexpected menace to the Indian empire of the house of Ghor.

Revolt of the Gakkars.

This menace comes from the fierce Gakkar tribes of the North-west Frontier, those same tribes which had been a source of so much trouble to Mahmud of Ghazni, and which, now raising the flag of revolt, poured down from their hills into the fertile plains of the Punjab and took the capital, Lahore, by storm.

Shahab-ud-Din being most probably at Ghazni, he and his Viceroy found themselves practically cut off from each other by this invasion, and therefore were both compelled to take immediate action. Shahab-ud-Din advanced with his army into the Punjab, whilst Kutub-ud-Din tried to come to his assistance at the head of another force from Delhi.

Although the Gakkars were far less redoubtable in the plains than in their native hills, fully two years elapsed before the rising was definitely crushed and the rebels forced to accept Islam. Burning with hatred and seething with feelings of revenge towards their conquerors, the tribesmen withdrew to their mountains.

Believing all danger to be over, Shahab-ud-Din started on his return journey to Ghazni. On the night of March 14, 1205, he encamped on the banks of the Indus near the town of Rohtak, and the heat being very oppressive, he ordered his attendants to draw the curtains of his tent back, so that he might enjoy the refreshing breeze from the river.

In the small hours of the morning, without any of the Emperor's bodyguard having the slightest foreboding of trouble, a party of Gakkars, who had evidently swum across the river Indus, succeeded in evading the sentries outside the camp, and rushing into the Sultan's tent, slew Shahab-ud-Din while he slept.

In the Moslem world opinions have always been divided as to which of the two Mohammedan sovereigns, Shahab-ud-Din or Mahmud of Ghazni, the Image Breaker, was the more outstanding personality.

Those who put religious fanaticism before political and military genius look upon Mahmud of Ghazni as the ideal Moslem sovereign, but to others again Shahab-ud-Din appears immeasurably superior by virtue of the far greater conquests which he achieved in India. His campaigns, unlike those of Mahmud of Ghazni, were not mere raids on a

large scale, whose main object was to force the adoption of Islam upon the population ; they were undertaken with the definite aim of incorporating the subjugated areas permanently into his empire. This is proved by the fact that, at the time of his death, his rule extended over the whole of the Punjab, Northern Sind, Delhi, the Upper Gangetic Valley, Bundelkhand, Bihar and Bengal, in addition to his territories in Central Asia.

The authority of the house of Ghor was acknowledged and firmly established throughout these wide dominions, but with Shahab-ud-Din's disappearance, the Indian territories passed to a new dynasty.

Shahab-ud-Din having left no son, there followed a brief period during which several rival aspirants laid claim to the throne, which was ultimately ascended by his nephew Mahmud, son of his brother Ghiyas-ud-Din. All the interests of the new ruler were centred in Afghanistan, where he had up to that moment lived, and he had no ambition to leave that country in order to establish his rule south of the Indus.

Kutub-ud-Din proclaimed Emperor. Slave dynasty of Delhi.

He immediately despatched the Royal Insignia, accompanied by the Patent of Kingship, to the Viceroy Kutub-ud-Din, and on July 24, 1206, the ex-slave and soldier of fortune was proclaimed at Lahore first Mohammedan Emperor of India.[1]

The brief reign of Kutub-ud-Din (1206-1210), which was brought to a close by a fatal accident at polo, was as entirely peaceful as all the events leading up to it had been tempestuous and full of bloodshed. He devoted himself to the reorganisation and improvement of the civil administration of his dominions and to the beautifying of his capital, Delhi. Out of the ashes of old Yoginipur there arose a splendid Musulman city, within the walls of which the Emperor caused one of the most beautiful mosques which adorn the Islamic East to be erected.

This mosque, constructed largely from materials derived from destroyed Hindu and Jain temples, has the impressive name of Kuwat-ul-Islam (Power of Islam), and has practically retained its pristine splendour to the present day. In the courtyard surrounding it stands the mighty column constructed of red sandstone known as the Kutub Minar, an enduring monument to the Musulman conquest of Hindustan.

[1] Shahab-ud-Din, though Emperor of India in fact, never actually assumed the title.

Three beautiful Arabic inscriptions, the first two immortalising the titles and achievements of Shahab-ud-Din of Ghor, and the lowest bearing Kutub-ud-Din's name, adorn the memorial, a fact which is typical of all absence of any attempt at self-glorification in the character of Kutub-ud-Din, as compared to so many other Oriental monarchs.

The son of the deceased sovereign, Aram by name, was immediately proclaimed Emperor, but, lacking all the outstanding qualities of his father, to which the latter owed his meteoric rise to power, he was totally unable to maintain supreme authority; thus his accession to the throne was promptly followed by the revolt of Nasir-ud-Din Kubacha, Governor of Multan and Northern Sind, who proclaimed his independence, and of Mohammed-ibyn-Bakhtyar in Bengal, who believed the moment ripe for the realisation of a long-cherished plan, that of transforming his viceroyalty into a kingship.

Recognising the weak and irresolute character of their monarch, which they felt would in all probability involve them in warfare with the rebellious Moslem satraps and lead to a national rising of the Hindus, the more patriotic section of the nobles of the court of Delhi determined to depose Aram and to offer the throne to Shams-ud-Din Altamsh, son-in-law of the late Emperor, and a man of proved ability and strength of character.

Altamsh immediately acceded to the demands of the nobles, and, having very little difficulty in defeating a mild attempt on the part of Aram, assisted by a small section of the Delhi troops, to retain the sovereignty, he was in the same year enthroned Emperor.

The reign of this monarch, which extended from 1211 to 1236, brought with it a further and steady extension of the Mohammedan power in India. His first act was to suppress a revolt of his Turki cavalry, after which, in 1217, he proceeded against Nasir-ud-Din Kubacha of Northern Sind with the intention of ousting him from power. This attempt had to be abandoned for the time being, Nasir-ud-Din proving too formidable an enemy.

Rise of the Mongols under Ghenghis Khan.

Immediately after the return of the Emperor to Delhi an incident occurred, which, but for his calm judgement, might have ended in disaster both to him and his empire. At the period of which we are writing, the Mongol hordes of the terrible Ghenghis Khan were carrying out successful raids over Central Asia, and amongst the states overwhelmed by them was the Sultanate of Kharizm.

The Sultan's son, Jelal-ud-Din, made a brave defence, but eventually fled, wounded, into India and besought the assistance of Altamsh in suppressing his enemies. The Emperor's sympathies were undoubtedly with his fellow-Musulman in his righteous fight against the Shamanistic Mongols, but prudence, in view of the menace to his own country, in view of the fact that a formidable Mongol army, with the Great Khan himself at its head, was encamped on the banks of the Indus, prevailed upon him to refuse and to decide upon a policy of non-intervention.

At a later date Jelal-ud-Din was successful in reconquering unaided a portion of the Persian dominions of his house.

As soon as Altamsh found himself sufficiently strong, he made a further attempt at driving Nasir-ud-Din Kubacha out of power, and this time achieved complete success. The rebel governor was defeated and met his death by drowning in the Indus, and the whole of Northern Sind passed under the rule of the Emperor.

Southern Sind had never formed part of the territories governed by Nasir-ud-Din Kubacha and continued to retain its independence under the Samma dynasty of Rajputs, a branch of the great Yadu clan, which had risen to power at the time when the decline of the Abbassid Khalifate had caused the downfall of Arab sovereignty in Sind.

Conquest of Malwa.

In 1226 Altamsh determined to make an attempt to extend the Musulman empire in Central India by the conquest of the rich province of Malwa, which, since the year 820, had been ruled over by a Hindu dynasty of the Pramara clan of Rajputs. This kingdom flourished in the reigns of Munja (974–995) and of his nephew Bhoja (1018–1060), when it reached the zenith of its fame, and its capital, Dhara, was considered one of the greatest centres of Hindu civilisation and Sanskrit culture. It had successfully repulsed a raid attempted by Mahmud the Image Breaker, chiefly because of the impregnability of the famous hill fortress of Mandu, and had continued to maintain its independence.

The attack by Mahmud could not, however, from the fact that it was undertaken from beyond the frontier of India, compare with that of Altamsh, a sovereign whose great superiority in strength lay in his being firmly established in the heart of Hindustan.

Mandu was taken by assault, and the Pramara kingdom of Malwa shared the fate of its neighbour Mahoba and was incorporated in the empire of Delhi.

The ancient temple of Saraswati, Goddess of Learning, once the meeting-place of the learned pandits who had frequented the courts of Munja and Bhoja, was transformed into a mosque; the famous city of Ujjain, where the legendary king Vikramaditya is believed to have held his court; and Bhilsa, with its revered Hindu shrines and magnificent Buddhist topes dating back to the age of Asoka, all passed under Moslem rule.

The final and greatest triumph of Altamsh was achieved in 1231 when he defeated Sarang Deo, the reigning Pratihara chief of Gwalior, and definitely occupied the great fortress.

He then turned his victorious arms against Mohammed-ibyn-Bakhtyar, the rebellious Governor of Bengal, who was ousted from power, a new governor being appointed in his place.

When at the death of Altamsh on April 30, 1235, the Mohammedan empire of Delhi passed to his second son, Rukn-ud-Din Firoz, it was firmly established as the paramount power, and the territories extending from the Indus to the Lower Ganges came, some under his direct rule and some under his indirect rule.

During the latter part of his reign, Altamsh had been formally accepted by the Abbassid Khalif of Baghdad as head of an independent Musulman state, a fact which had greatly enhanced the prestige of the Delhi empire.

The reign of Rukn-ud-Din was not destined to be of long duration, and its outstanding features reflected but scant credit upon the successor of the great monarch. Weakness and licentiousness being the most marked characteristics of the new Emperor, he immediately upon his accession gave himself up to a life of dissipation and surrendered all actual power in the state to his mother, Shah Turkhan, formerly a slave girl of Altamsh, a woman who combined a will of iron with the most merciless cruelty.

Whilst the Emperor indulged in drunken orgies or spent his days in the harem with his dancing girls, Shah Turkhan, sovereign in all but name, subjected the imperial court to a veritable reign of terror. Any of the nobles or officials, irrespective of rank, who appeared obstacles in her way, were removed without pity. By her orders her stepson, Nasir-ud-Din, the sixth son of Altamsh, was imprisoned, and the youngest son of the late Emperor, Prince Kutub-ud-Din, brutally murdered.

The nobles, after a time, indignant at these atrocities, determined at all costs to bring about a change of

sovereignty, and, rather curiously for a Moslem country, their choice fell upon Raziya Sultana, daughter of Altamsh.

This princess, beautiful in person and an accomplished student of the Koran and Koranic law, had been the favourite child of Altamsh and his constant companion, whom he consulted on all matters vital to the state. This great trust in his daughter is proved by the fact that, on his departure from Delhi to march upon Gwalior, he appointed Raziya Regent of the Empire, and when asked by one of his nobles why he had not bestowed this high and responsible office on one of his sons, he answered that, whereas they spent most of their time drinking, she had always aided him in the affairs of state and " was better than twenty such sons ". Having communicated their desire to the princess and obtained her consent, the conspirators seized the opportunity of the absence of Rukn-ud-Din at Badaun to depose him from the throne. Raziya, clad in the garments of a suppliant and attended by her principal supporters, proceeded to the steps of the palace from which she addressed the assembled troops, appealing to them to espouse her cause.

Her beauty and the simplicity and courage with which she appealed to them produced an immense effect, the soldiers breaking out into shouts of acclamation, and their officers escorting her to the hall of public audience (Diwan-i-Am), where she was formally enthroned as Empress of Hindustan.

Rukn-ud-Din did not lack personal courage, and when the news of the revolution reached him he at once called together all the troops available in the district of Badaun and marched upon the capital. The tyranny exercised by his mother, however, recoiled upon the son and had incensed even the members of his family against him ; and Raziya, assuming personal command of the soldiers at Delhi, led them against the forces of her brother. There was, however, no occasion for the princess to give battle to the Emperor. Some of the disaffected officers of his army succeeded in winning over his troops, with the result that Rukn-ud-Din was seized and delivered, bound and helpless, into the hands of his sister.

Raziya's sense of justice had been so cruelly outraged by the brutal murder of her youngest brother, to whom she was deeply attached, that she was totally impervious to the frenzied appeals of the deposed monarch for mercy. She met them with the pitiless reply, " Let the slayer be slain ",

and Rukn-ud-Din was executed, leaving Raziya unchallenged in her position as Empress of India.

For three years and a half she ruled the empire with firmness, wisdom and justice, and was ever accessible to the demands of her subjects from the highest to the lowest. Her path was, however, from the first beset by difficulties and perils, chiefly owing to her youth and beauty, and to the fact, above all others, that she was not married.

The chivalry so characteristic of the Rajput Thakurs of the Hindu kingdoms was entirely lacking amongst the Turki and Afghan nobles of her court, who one and all saw in the presumed weakness of a feminine ruler the chance of becoming himself the power behind the throne.

Intrigue and slander became rife around the person of the young Empress, and scandalous rumours were spread by her enemies and circulated at the imperial court and in the bazaars of Delhi, connecting her name with that of a handsome young Abyssinian slave of the palace. This slave held the appointment of Master of the Horse, and the Empress, too proud to repudiate the infamous charges brought against her, even lent colour to them by permitting him to lift her on to her horse when, as often, she took equestrian exercise.

The threatened storm broke in 1239 with the rebellion of Malik Altunia, the Turki governor of Bhatinda.

Raziya met the challenge with wonted courage, and placing herself at the head of her troops, marched against the rebels. The unfortunate Empress had, however, built too firmly upon the loyalty of the army and of her surroundings generally. Her most trusted officers were from the first in secret communication with the enemy and the troops were quickly won over by the conspirators. Raziya was seized in her tent and taken a prisoner to Malik Altunia.

What the original design of the rebel leader had been in rising against the Empress cannot, of course, be stated with any degree of certainty. It may have been his intention to make a bold bid for the throne for himself, or to attempt to place upon it another scion of the family of Altamsh. One fact is beyond dispute ; when his eyes first beheld his captive, her beauty so completely enthralled him as to make him forget all else, and, imploring her to become his consort, he promised that, if she would grant his request, she should immediately be restored to her rightful position as Empress. This marriage illustrates one more of those unforeseen events so frequently met with in Oriental history.

Meanwhile the confusion in Delhi which had followed

upon the act of treachery committed by the nobles against the Empress assumed greater proportions, and resulted in a party amongst them, who desired to avoid the perils of an interregnum, proclaiming the Prince Bairam, another son of Altamsh, as Emperor. This monarch inaugurated his reign by instantly despatching an army against his sister, and the final struggle took place at Kaithal in the Punjab on October 24, 1239. It resulted in the complete defeat of Raziya and her consort, who were both captured, and after months of imprisonment, put to death.

It is impossible to read the tragic fate of Raziya Sultana unmoved. The pathos of it is best summed up in the epitaph to her memory by Ferishta—" She had no fault but that she was a woman ".

From the year 1239 to 1241 the Emperor Bairam succeeded in retaining the throne which he had acquired by such cruel means. He, however, lacked the powers which make a ruler, and his empire was from the first threatened by raids from the pagan Mongols or Moghuls of Central Asia.

First Mongol invasion of India.

In 1241 they succeeded in overrunning the Punjab and capturing Lahore, and the Emperor, realising the nearness of the peril, placed all the troops available under the command of his Vizier, Ikhtiyar-ud-Din, and sent them against the invaders.

The Vizier was himself at heart a traitor, and made use of his success in defeating and expelling the Mongols to further his own aims. The victory he had gained added greatly to his prestige amongst the nobles at the court, who promptly joined him in a plot to depose the Emperor.

Bairam obtained knowledge of the conspiracy, and as a result the Vizier, on his return to Delhi, found the gates closed. From this moment he made no further attempt to disguise his intentions, and aided by the army which he had led against the Mongols, he laid siege to the capital.

The city capitulated on May 10, 1241; Bairam was imprisoned and shortly afterwards murdered by order of the Vizier, who then proclaimed Ala-ud-Din Masa'ud, son of Rukn-ud-Din, Emperor.

The reign of this monarch, four years in duration, constituted a record of cruelty and of vice, and so incensed the nobles that they deposed and imprisoned him and offered the throne to his uncle, Nasir-ud-Din Mahmud, the sixth son of Altamsh, who accepted it.

The new Emperor's youth had been a sad one, and had,

as previously stated, been for the most part spent in imprisonment. His sole means of support had been writing and selling copies of the Koran. Ala-ud-Din Massa'ud had, upon his accession, given orders for his release and appointed him Governor of Baraich. He was a remarkable man, and had he in early youth enjoyed the advantages of a training suitable to his position, he might very possibly have played a conspicuous part in Indian history. His habits and tastes were of the simplest, and he did not in any way alter them after his accession to the throne. His wife —he had only one—was compelled to cook for and wait upon him as he refused to employ any servants, and the tale is reported that the Empress, having complained to him one day that she had burnt her fingers while baking bread, was told by her consort to persevere and God would reward her, but that he as Emperor was merely a trustee of the state funds and would allow no extra expenditure on servants.

It is not unnatural that a ruler professing these idealistic principles was easily overshadowed, and in his case, his famous Vizier, Ghiyas-ud-Din Balban, became the real power behind the throne, all the more so as the Emperor Nasir-ud-Din had married his daughter.

This man of humble origin, whose name had been Ulugh Khan, had, at the outset of his career, been a leader of a band of Turki slaves of Altamsh, known as the Forty, who were united by an undertaking which bound each member to aid the advancement of the other. Ulugh Khan, however, was immeasurably superior in intellect to his fellow-members, and by his brilliant gifts rose to such high favour with Altamsh that the Emperor had bestowed upon his former slave the hand of his younger daughter in marriage.

Amongst the great services rendered to his sovereign by the Vizier, was the further extension of Mohammedan rule in India by the subjugation of numerous petty Hindu Rajas in the Doab, and the incorporation of the famous Kachwaha Rajput kingdom of Narwar in Bundelkhand into the Moslem empire. His most important and far-reaching achievement was the freeing of India from the Mongol peril, which was a threat not only to the empire, but to Islam in general.

Mongol Empire at its zenith. Overthrow of the Arab Khalifate.

At this particular time the Mongol empire had almost reached the zenith of its power, and from the date of the accession in 1251 of the Great Khan Mangu, grandson of Ghenghis, kingdom after kingdom in Central Asia disappeared before the nomad hordes which swept the country like a devastating tempest, and in addition Mangu's

brother, Kublai Khan,[1] ruled in China as Viceroy of the Great Khan.

The climax of Mongol ascendancy was reached in 1258, when a third brother of the Great Khan, the terrible Huluku, captured Baghdad and overthrew the Abbassid Khalifate. The world-famous capital of Harun-al-Rashid was destroyed, and its population partly massacred and partly carried off into slavery.

The system of irrigation, which had existed since the days of the Babylonians, was ruined, and Mesopotamia was thus transformed from the Garden of Asia into the arid desert land it is to-day.

Mongol peril staved off by Balban.

Balban had foreseen the danger as far back as 1250, when, acting on the axiom that the surest defence is to attack, he sent an army into Afghanistan, which succeeded in re-capturing Ghazni, previously taken by the Mongols.

This bold move so greatly impressed the Mongols that the empire of Delhi remained unmolested during the period of devastation we have just described, and resulted, after his capture of Baghdad, in an envoy being sent bearing greetings and presents from the victorious Huluku to the Emperor of Hindustan. This led to the establishment of friendly relations between the court of Delhi and the dynasty of Ghenghis Khan.

Nasir-ud-Din died on February 18, 1266, leaving no children, and it was obvious that the choice of the nobles should fall upon the man who had rendered such great services to his country, and Ghiyas-ud-Din Balban ascended the throne by popular acclamation.

With his accession the court of Delhi became one of the most splendid and highly cultured in Asia. Fifteen Musulman sovereigns of Central Asia, who had been expelled from their kingdoms by the Mongols, sought refuge in Delhi, and to each Balban assigned a particular part of the city, which he was permitted to name after his own former capital, and where he surrounded himself with all the pomp and ceremony of more prosperous days. A cordial welcome was extended to learned Moslem divines and men of letters generally, but the outstanding personality amongst them at the imperial court was the great Persian poet Saadi, who by special invitation of the Emperor's eldest son, the Crown Prince Mohammed, resided there for some time.

[1] Kublai Khan, successor of Mangu as Great Khan and founder of the Yuan dynasty in China, and best known to Europeans through the *Travels of Marco Polo* and Coleridge's poem "Kubla Khan".

Despite his evident appreciation of culture and of learning, Balban's character retained much of the cruelty and ruthlessness of his Turkoman ancestors. A revolt by the warlike Hindus of Mewat, the territory south of Delhi, which broke out in the year of his accession, was crushed mercilessly by the Emperor ; no fewer than 100,000 Mewatis, without distinction of age or sex, being put to death, and the forests to which they had fled being uprooted and turned into cultivated sites.

In the year 1279 Balban was faced with a more formidable peril by the revolt of Tughril Khan, Viceroy of Bengal, who had proclaimed himself king of that province and had successfully defeated two expeditions sent against him by the Emperor. Balban lost no time, and leading a third expedition in person against the rebels, brought the whole career of Tughril Khan to a close.

The actual laurels in this great success fell to one of the Emperor's officers, Malik Makandar by name. This officer had been sent in advance at the head of forty troopers only to reconnoitre, and coming unexpectedly upon the rebel camp, he determined to risk all in a surprise attack.

Followed by his small band the intrepid commander charged full into the camp, forcing an entrance into Tughril Khan's tent where he was conferring with some of his principal officers. Several of these were killed on the spot, but Tughril Khan escaped for the moment, and, thinking the forty troopers to be the immediate vanguard of the imperial army, fled for his life. The entire rebel camp fell into the hands of Balban, and the death of Tughril Khan, who was overtaken and killed in the fight, was the final act in this drama.

Bughra Khan, the second son of the Emperor, was nominated by him Viceroy of Bengal.

Balban inflicted such terrible cruelty upon the captive rebels, whom he had brought to Delhi, and on their hapless wives and families, that the Moslem divines and priests of his court thought fit to interfere, and he was obliged to adopt a more humane attitude towards these unfortunate people.

The Emperor had now reached a great age, and the declining years of his life were saddened by the death of his favourite son, the Crown Prince Mohammed, whom he had appointed Viceroy of the Punjab, and who received a mortal wound in the year 1286, having successfully routed another Mongol invasion of the empire.

The Emperor never recovered from the shock, and realising his end to be near, summoned his second son, Bughra Khan, from Bengal, intending to make him his heir. The aged sovereign rallied somewhat soon after his son's arrival, and Bughra Khan, thinking him on the way to recovery, returned to Bengal without taking leave of his father. This so angered the Emperor that he nominated his grandson Kaikhusru, son of the late Prince Mohammed, his successor.

A few days later the Emperor breathed his last, and the nobles, fearing that civil war might result from this proposed change in the succession, prevailed upon Kaikhusru to waive his claim and return to Multan as Governor, a post he had previously held, and elected Bughra Khan's son, Muizz-ud-Din Kaikubad, Emperor of Hindustan.

When Kaikubad first ascended the throne he was a handsome youth of eighteen, whose personality inspired confidence, but he was no sooner established in power than he started upon a life of self-indulgence and vice, chiefly owing to the influence of his Vizier, Nizam-ud-Din, who thus became the virtual ruler of the empire. Bughra Khan, the Emperor's father, visited him in the year 1286 with the express purpose of warning him against his Vizier, and as a result Nizam-ud-Din was shortly afterwards poisoned.

For a brief period following upon this event, Kaikubad appeared to be taking his responsibilities more seriously, but eventually he returned to his licentious ways of living, with the result that his health broke down and he was stricken with paralysis. From the moment this happened it was obvious that he would be forcibly removed from the throne.

Even during the reign of Balban, the custom followed by Kutub-ud-Din of appointing only Turki slaves to the highest offices of state, had been abandoned in favour of raising to power the representatives of certain distinguished Afghan and Turki families.

Of these the Khilji, a mixture of Pathan and Tartar, held the most prominent place, and when the Emperor Kaikubad, by reason of his illness, was incapacitated from ruling, three nobles, led by Jelal-ud-Din Firoz, the head of the Khilji clan, seized the reins of government.

For a short time this triumvirate continued to govern, nominally on behalf of the helpless sovereign, but in point of fact Jelal-ud-Din was already at that period filling every office with his own adherents.

The Emperor Kaikubad was murdered in the year 1288 in his country palace by a Tartar slave at the instigation of Jelal-ud-Din, who, determined to make himself Emperor, also caused the monarch's infant son to be slain.

Following immediately upon these crimes he ascended the throne, and thus the first Pathan dynasty was proclaimed at Delhi.

CHAPTER V

THE DYNASTY OF KHILJI, A.D. 1288–1321

JELAL-UD-DIN, the new Emperor, was seventy years of age when he ascended the throne, and, before committing the crime which had brought him the imperial sceptre, had had a long and distinguished career as servant of the state. When he assumed the imperial dignity, he made it perfectly clear to his court that he continued to regard himself as servant rather than as absolute master, and steadily refused to take his seat upon the throne in the hall of public audience, or even to ride into the courtyard of the palace. First Pathan dynasty.

Simplicity was the keynote of his entire court, and he received his friends with as little ostentation as in the days when he was merely a general in the employ of the slave king. This lack of any desire for outward show did not, however, prevent the Emperor, who was himself a man of culture, from gathering around him all the most distinguished intellects of his day; and poets, artists, musicians and learned men from every part of Moslem Asia found a ready welcome to Delhi.

Perhaps the most distinguished figure in this circle was the famous Persian poet Khusru, known as the "Sugar-tongued Parrot", on whom Jelal-ud-Din conferred the honour of nobility with the title of Amir and whom he appointed Imperial Librarian. His finest poems deal with some of the many varied events of the period of the Khilji dynasty.

The Amir Khusru's closest friend, the Musulman ecclesiastic Shaikh Nizam-ud-Din Aulia, was equally famous, though in a different way. He was the representative of the celebrated Chisti family of Pirs or Saints, and a man who, in the future, was destined to play a prominent part in the complicated intrigues of the Delhi court.

It appears an extraordinary inconsistency in the character of the Emperor that, though he had gained his throne by the brutal murder of a paralytic and an infant, his whole reign was conducted on a system of exaggerated clemency, which was to prove his undoing.

Plotters against the security of the state and common criminals, all were sure of receiving a ready pardon, and, to the repeated remonstrances from his well-wishers in regard to the danger of such a proceeding, the Emperor invariably replied, "My friends, I am now old, and I wish to go down to the grave without shedding more blood".

In a country such as early Musulman India this policy constituted a grave danger; loyalty to the Crown was, especially in the case of the nobles, a very superficial thing, each one seeing in himself a possible emperor should the existing sovereign be overthrown. Jelal-ud-Din's leniency was interpreted as weakness, and, sedition and crime becoming rife throughout the land, this condition of affairs culminated in a plot by certain of the Emperor's courtiers to bring about his assassination, and with it a change of dynasty. In the last moment one of the conspirators became conscience-stricken and revealed the plot to Jelal-ud-Din, who immediately ordered his guards to arrest the other members of the band.

The guilty nobles were forthwith brought into the Emperor's presence, fully prepared to be sentenced either to be flayed alive, or trampled to death by elephants, both quite common methods of execution at the Delhi court. To their utter stupefaction, Jelal-ud-Din drew his sword, and flinging it before his prisoners declared that whoever amongst them felt brave enough to commit the deed, might slay him as he stood. Greatly impressed and moved by the monarch's courage, the conspirators one and all prostrated themselves before him and implored his forgiveness, declaring that the conspiracy had been contrived when they had been under the influence of wine. The Emperor accorded them his full pardon, only to find himself shortly afterwards threatened by a second conspiracy which he had to deal with in a very different manner.

Not long after Jelal-ud-Din's accession, a celebrated Persian dervish, Sidi Mowla by name, had settled in Delhi and had founded a theological academy there for members of the Musulman religious orders, combining a rest house with it ostensibly for the Moslem poor. Here he hospitably received wandering *Qualandars* and professional beggars, but

presently rumours began to circulate round the bazaars of Delhi that this hospitality was only a cloak with which Sidi Mowla veiled the seditious discourses he delivered to guests and pupils alike.

At first the Emperor refused to attach any importance to these rumours and the dervish, thinking himself secure by reason of his sacred calling, threw all discretion to the winds, and addressing the populace of Delhi, openly proclaimed himself their destined liberator from the enslaving yoke of the house of Khilji.

Jelal-ud-Din could now no longer blind himself to the extreme gravity of the situation. He immediately gave orders for the arrest of Sidi Mowla, who was first subjected to torture and then sentenced to be trampled to death by one of the royal elephants. The dervish retained his defiant spirit to the end, and, whilst being led away to execution, solemnly cursed the Emperor and all his descendants, a curse which shortly afterwards was brought back to the memory of the superstitious populace of the city.

In the year 1291, the empire was ravaged by a terrible famine followed by a deadly pestilence. Almost the first to succumb to the plague was the Emperor's eldest son, the Khan Khanan, and immediately the people began to connect this death with the curse of the dervish, and from that moment the authority and influence of Jelal-ud-Din began to decline.

He succeeded in temporarily restoring the confidence of his subjects by repelling a Mongol invasion of the country in 1292, and by crushing a rebellion in Malwa in the following year.

It was during this latter campaign that there rose to distinction, Ala-ud-Din, the Emperor's nephew and son-in-law, the man whose name was destined to be written large across the page of Indian history.

The character of Ala-ud-Din Khilji is one of the most complex and in some ways contradictory ever met with amongst the great men of all ages. A born soldier devoid of all fear, he knew how to win and to keep the devotion of those who served him. He could show exceptional generosity in dealing with an avowed enemy, and at the same time, was capable of the most diabolical and cold-blooded treachery to those who had been his greatest benefactors. A bigoted and even fanatical Moslem, he did not hesitate to violate the laws of the Prophet by habitually drinking to excess, nor had he any scruples in sacrificing the honour of

a woman to a passing desire, or in taking the life of a man who stood in the way of his relentless ambition.

During the Malwa revolt Ala-ud-Din had succeeded in reconquering the city and district of Bhilsa, one of the principal centres of the rising, and in appreciation of this, and ignoring the counsel of those who warned him from taking this step, the Emperor conferred upon him the governorship of Oudh. Apparently greatly honoured by this proof of Jelal-ud-Din's gratitude, Ala-ud-Din proceeded to Karrah near Allahabad, the seat of his viceroyalty, but even the proud position he occupied as Governor of the Garden of India did not satisfy his ambition for long, and, in 1294, he begged and obtained his uncle's permission to invade the Deccan.

Deccan invaded by Ala-ud-Din.

In order to accomplish his design, Ala-ud-Din resorted to a plan in which cunning and audacity were strongly mingled. Placing himself at the head of a force of only 8000 cavalry, he advanced over the passes of the Vindhya and Satpura Mountains, and, reaching Berar, announced to the local Hindu sovereigns that he had been exiled from the Emperor's court and was going south to place his services and those of his followers at the disposal of the Hindu King of Rajahmundry.

The chivalrous Rajput princes believed his story, and though, but a short time before, Ala-ud-Din had ravaged the holy shrines of Bhilsa and had shown himself an implacable enemy to their faith, they refrained from any resistance and allowed him to proceed unmolested to his true goal, the fortress city of Devagiri, the capital of the Yadava kingdom of the Deccan.

Arrived at his destination, Ala-ud-Din entirely threw off his mask and galloped through the streets of Devagiri at the head of his cavalry, simultaneously sending an envoy to the Maharaja to inform him that this was merely the advance guard, the entire imperial army following, and that their withdrawal could only be effected at the price of the whole state treasure.

The city of Devagiri was not walled in and therefore open to attack, but the Maharaja Ram Deo, when the first rumour of danger reached him, took refuge with his troops in the fortress on the summit of the mighty rock from which the city derived its name and which constituted its sole means of defence.

Towering above the plain to a height of 500 feet, this fortress, one of the most formidable and famous in India,

could only be reached through a tunnel hewn out of the solid rock itself, while, to render it still more impregnable, the upper exit was in times of danger closed by an iron shutter heated red-hot, thus turning the passage into a death-trap to any assailants. Ala-ud-Din made no such attempt, but his cunning plan to make the Maharaja believe that the entire imperial army was at the gates of the city was completely successful, and the Hindu prince capitulated after a short siege and agreed to the terms, which were the handing over of gold weighing 1500 pounds and in addition to this a large quantity of precious stones. Ala-ud-Din had chosen a propitious moment for his bold venture, for when he first appeared before Devagiri the main Yadava army, under the command of Shankar Deo, the heir apparent, was engaged on a distant expedition.

Just as the terms of capitulation had been concluded, this army returned to the capital, and Shankar Deo, indignant at the terms wrung from his father, immediately repudiated them by attacking the Moslems with his whole force.

Defeat and death seemed almost inevitable for the small army of daring raiders, when, at the critical moment, the tide of battle was turned by the timely intervention of a Moslem officer, who, having been left in the town of Devagiri with about 1000 horsemen to cover Ala-ud-Din's retreat, now made use of these forces to come to the rescue of his leader, thereby winning a decisive victory for the Moslems.

In spite of the fact that Ram Deo disavowed all knowledge of his son's actions, Ala-ud-Din resumed the siege of the fortress and when, after a short period, he consented to withdraw, it was at the price of a greatly increased ransom in silver, precious stones and rich silks ; and, what was of far greater importance, the cession of the province of Berar to the empire of Delhi.

Meanwhile the aged Emperor, growing anxious at the absence of all news of his nephew, had left Delhi for Gwalior to be nearer the scene of his operations, and it was here that he received a full account, by letter, from Ala-ud-Din of his success at Devagiri, and with it the announcement that he was immediately returning to Karrah to take up his governorship there again.

Those amongst the Emperor's courtiers who were genuinely loyal to him and who had never wavered in their distrust of his nephew, argued that Ala-ud-Din's bold stroke had been undertaken more for his own self-glorification and personal gain than to extend the dominions of his sovereign,

and advised Jelal-ud-Din to summon him to Gwalior without further delay to compel him to yield up his spoil. Ala-ud-Din, however, possessed in the person of his brother Almas Beg at the court of Delhi a man devoted to his interests and at the same time completely without scruples in his methods of furthering them. He wrote at once to tell his brother of the summons which he was about to receive from the Emperor desiring his presence at Gwalior, and added that its real object was to put him to death.

It is impossible to state accurately what Ala-ud-Din's ultimate aims had hitherto been; doubtless his own advancement was never absent from his mind, but certain it is that on receipt of his brother's letter, any lingering scruples vanished and he determined on the murder of his uncle and the usurpation of the throne for himself.

He sent a reply to the Emperor's letter, couched in the humblest terms, imploring his uncle's pardon should he have appeared unduly presumptuous, and saying that if he obeyed the summons to Gwalior he would be doing so at great risk to his life, and finally begging Jelal-ud-Din to visit him at Karrah, there to receive from him the whole of the treasure won at Devagiri.

Deaf to any further protests from his faithful adherents at the court, the Emperor accepted his nephew's invitation, and on July 19, 1295, arrived at Karrah by water, attended only by a nominal escort. On disembarking, the Emperor was met by Ala-ud-Din and his suite, and the scene which followed is best described in the graphic words of the Moslem chronicler :[1]

"When Ala-ud-Din saw the Sultan he fell at his feet. The Sultan took his hand, and, treating him as a son, kissed his eyes and cheeks and stroked his beard and said :

"'I have brought thee up from infancy, why art thou afraid of me?' At that moment the stony-hearted traitor gave the fatal signal, and Mohammed Salim of Samana, an evil man of an evil family, struck at the Sultan with his sword, but the blow fell short and wounded his own hand. He again struck and wounded the Sultan, who ran towards the river crying, 'Ah, thou villain, Ala-ud-Din! What hast thou done?' Ikhtiyar-ud-Din, who had run after the betrayed monarch, threw him down and cut off his head, and bore it dripping with blood to Ala-ud-Din."

Following immediately on this brutally callous murder, the adherents of Ala-ud-Din hailed him as Emperor of

[1] Zia-ud-Din Barni, *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi* (Elliot, vol. iii. p. 155).

Hindustan, but this did not amount to his sovereignty being at once generally recognised. As soon as the assassination of Jelal-ud-Din became known at Delhi, the widowed Empress proclaimed her youngest son Kadir Khan Emperor, and called upon the nobles to rally round him and support him against the usurper.

Almost simultaneously with the news of the murder, intelligence reached the city that Ala-ud-Din was marching on the capital, and the young sovereign, placing himself at the head of all the available troops, advanced to meet him.

Ala-ud-Din, however, had, with wonted craftiness, laid his plans well and had secured the co-operation of a strong section in Delhi, headed by the Shaikh Nizam-ud-Din Aulia, the leading Musulman ecclesiastic, whose spiritual influence over his countrymen was immense. The Emperor and his mother Malika Jehan, realising the network of treachery by which they were surrounded, believed all resistance to be useless and decided to retire to the fortress of Multan, of which Arkali Khan, the murdered sovereign's eldest son, was governor.

Ala-ud-Din's entry into Delhi was thus unopposed, and a few months later his formal enthronement as Emperor took place in the capital amidst scenes of great pomp and rejoicing. He celebrated his accession by distributing a large portion of the Devagiri treasure amongst the troops and the mob of Delhi, so that, in the words of Ferishta, "He who ought to have been received with detestation became the object of admiration to those who could not see the blackness of his deeds through the splendour of his munificence."[1]

As in the case of most usurpers, Ala-ud-Din could not feel wholly secure as long as the legitimate sovereign still lived, and his next move was to despatch an army to Multan under the command of his brother Almas Beg, whom he had ennobled with the title of Alaf Khan, with orders to obtain possession at all costs of the person of Kadir Khan and his brother.

Treachery had also found its way to the troops who were defending the young Emperor and his brother at Multan, and after a two months' siege the garrison revolted and handed the young princes over to Alaf Khan, with the stipulation that their lives should be spared.

Alaf Khan, had he been acting for himself only, might have shown some mercy, but Ala-ud-Din's cruel heart was implacable, and by his orders both the unfortunate princes

[1] Briggs' *Ferishta*, vol. i., p. 324.

were first blinded and then thrown into prison in the fortress of Hansi, where shortly afterwards they were foully murdered.

Ala-ud-Din had now no further obstacles to fear and was free to pursue a plan which had for some time matured in his brain, that of further and final conquest, in anticipation of which he had at his accession assumed the grandiloquent title of Sikandar Sani, " The Second Alexander ".

Circumstances which had arisen in Rajputana made the Emperor deem it advisable to direct his army against that country first.

Conquest of Jaisalmir.

The disastrous reign of Kaikubad, followed by the feeble way in which Jelal-ud-Din had wielded the sceptre, had given renewed hope to the rulers of the Rajput states of the North that they might yet be successful in routing the hated " Toork ", and Ala-ud-Din was no sooner firmly established upon his throne than he received significant proof of the declining prestige of the empire of Delhi amongst the Rajputs.

Situated in the heart of the great desert of Marwar, " the Region of Death ", there existed and exists up to the present day the state of Jaisalmir, ruled over by the famous Bhati clan of Rajputs who claimed descent from Krishna. The reigning Rawal or Prince of Jaisalmir, Jaitsi by name, obtained information that the annual tribute from Multan and Sind was on its way to Delhi and determined to seize it.

To this purpose he disguised his two sons Mulraj and Ratansi as grain-merchants and sent them, escorted by a force of 7000 horses and 1200 camels, to ambush the caravan and carry off the treasure.

When nearing the island of Bekher on the Indus they came upon the caravan which, guarded by 400 Mongol and Pathan cavalry, was resting there ; as their appearance did not arouse any suspicion they had no difficulty in obtaining permission to spend the night in the camp. When the guardians of the caravan were wrapped in slumber, the Bhatis suddenly attacked and killed them as they slept, carrying off the entire tribute to their desert capital.

Ala-ud-Din was not slow to retaliate, and, assembling an army so formidable that in the words of the Bhati chronicle, it " rolled on like the clouds in Bhadun ", he marched to Ajmere, which had always been the base for any campaign in Rajputana.

He himself, with the main body under his command, encamped on the borders of the Ana Sagar Lake, and

despatched a strong punitive force against Jaisalmir led by one of his most distinguished generals, a Pathan noble named Mahbub Khan.

In spite of continual attacks by a force of Bhati cavalry led by the Rawal's sons, Mahbub Khan at length succeeded in reaching Jaisalmir to find himself confronted by a city well provisioned for a prolonged siege, and the fifty-six bastions of its walls manned under the Rawal's personal command. All attempts to take the city by storm were defeated with heavy loss to the attacking force, and finally Mahbub Khan decided upon a different method of warfare and, ordering trenches to be dug, closely besieged it.

It was at this juncture that an incident took place which is of importance because it marks the first symptom in the history of India of any attempt at chivalry in the dealings between Hindu and Musulman.

Ratansi, the second son of the Rawal of Jaisalmir, was an enthusiastic chess player, combining with this gentle art all the daring and love of adventure characteristic of his race. Hearing that Mahbub Khan was also a devotee of the game, he sent a message to the enemy commander suggesting that they should call a truce for a certain number of hours each day and seek during that time to lighten the tedium of the siege by meeting outside the walls of the city in the friendly rivalry of a game of chess. To Mahbub Khan, a straightforward and honourable soldier, the sporting nature of this suggestion made a strong appeal; he agreed to it, and each successive day at the specified hour witnessed the strange spectacle of the Rajput prince and the Moslem commander, attended by a few officers, meeting under a tree outside the walls of Jaisalmir for their peaceful recreation.

After a while it became the habit of the commanders at the conclusion of the game to spend a few moments in friendly conversation, and gradually a warm sympathy sprang up between these two leaders of warring states and of opposing creeds.

The siege was still in progress when Rawal Jaitsi died, and his eldest son Mulraj succeeded him on the *Gadi* of Jaisalmir.

Simultaneously the news seemed to have reached Ala-ud-Din of the friendly intercourse between the two commanders, and Mahbub Khan was obliged regretfully to inform Ratansi that the Emperor, much angered by it, had sent him reinforcements and strict orders to take Jaisalmir by storm at all costs.

The final parting of the two friends was a sad one, and the very next day the Moslem troops advanced to the assault. Time after time they reached the battlements and were successfully hurled back by the brave defenders, and, at dusk, Mahbub Khan, who had lost 120 of his leading officers and no less than 9000 men, gave the order to retreat. Reinforcements were poured in from Ajmere and every approach to Jaisalmir was blockaded by troops despatched by Ala-ud-Din, with the result that the heroic Bhatis found their supply of food almost at an end.

Just as they were gathering what strength remained to them for a last desperate attempt at a sortie, scouts arrived with the almost unbelievable news that the besieging army, wearied by the protracted and terrible nature of the operations, was in full retreat.

For a short space hope revived, but the joy was only short-lived, and the fate of Jaisalmir was actually sealed by one of those acts of chivalry which are so typical of the Rajputs, and which so frequently in their history have brought disaster to their cause.

A younger brother of Mahbub Khan had been left behind desperately wounded during the Moslem retreat and was found on the field of battle by Prince Ratansi, who, mindful of his friendship with the Musulman commander, ordered his clansmen to bring the sufferer to his own palace, where his wounds were carefully dressed, and where he was treated with the greatest possible courtesy.

The trained soldier, when recovering from his wounds, was quick to notice the terrible straits to which the garrison had been reduced, and, as soon as he was able, succeeded in making good his escape and rejoining the Musulman army, where he gave his brother immediate information as to the true conditions existing within the walls of Jaisalmir.

Shortly afterwards the Rajput sentinels brought news to the Rawal that Mahbub Khan, at the head of the enemy forces, was marching upon the capital.

"This comes of your friendship with the Toork," bitterly exclaimed Mulraj to his brother. "What is to be done?"[1]

Ratansi replied, "There is but one path open, to immolate the women, to destroy by fire and water whatever is destructible, and to bury what is not".

The chief queen of Mulraj, on being informed by him of the impending doom awaiting all the women, replied with a smile on her face, "This night we shall prepare, and by the

[1] Tod's *Rajasthan*, vol. ii. p. 200.

morning's light we shall be inhabitants of *Swarga*" (Heaven). The night was spent by the Rawal, his nobles and their families in performing the last purification rites, and in prostrating themselves for the last time before the tutelary deity of their clan, and within the walls of the citadel a number of immense pyres were erected in preparation for the terrible sacrifice of the women.

At dawn the *Johur* or rite of self-immolation commenced. Led by their queen, the wives and daughters of the Bhati chieftains, clad in bridal robes and chanting the *Suhailea* (the song of joy), advanced to meet the death they had all unhesitatingly accepted in preference to a life of slavery in a Delhi harem.

No less than 24,000 women, their number including all the young and beautiful, perished in this gruesome holocaust —some by fire, others by the sword of father, brother or husband whom they had implored for this more rapid death, but all facing the end with the indomitable courage of the Kshatrya, and in the sure belief of a state of blessedness to come which made the occasion one of rejoicing rather than of woe.

The Rajputs had lost all they valued most in the world, they were fully aware of the hopelessness of their position, yet they determined to make a desperate fight before yielding up their lives.

Mahbub Khan was sitting in his tent issuing final instructions to his subordinates when he was informed that a messenger from Jaisalmir craved admittance carrying a letter from Prince Ratansi.

In this letter the Rajput prince, recalling the personal friendship existing between them, solemnly placed his two young sons Gharsi and Kanur under his protection and appealed to him in memory of that friendship to treat them with affection and to have them brought up in the faith of the Hindus.

The reply of Mahbub Khan showed him to be an honourable exception in those days of fanatical racial and religious hatred. A trusted servant was sent to Jaisalmir, who, after the young princes had taken a last farewell from their father, conveyed them to the Moslem camp, where Mahbub Khan received them with the utmost kindness and immediately appointed two Brahmins to attend them and give them religious instruction.

Meanwhile, clad in saffron robes and wearing on their heads the bridal *mor* or coronet, the Rawal Mulraj, his

brother Ratansi and the Bhati chiefs with their clansmen to the number of 3000, awaited the Musulman attack.

Mahbub, having obeyed the dictates of friendship, in according protection to the young princes, resumed his duty of a soldier and gave the word of command for the final assault on the capital.

As the Musulmans advanced to the attack, the deep booming of the *naggaras*, the giant kettledrums of the Rajputs, sent forth their note of defiance ; the gates were thrown open, and their entire force rushed out for their last encounter with the foe they had so long held at bay. When victory finally rested with the Moslems, the two royal brothers and all the leading chieftains of Jaisalmir lay dead upon the field.

Mahbub Khan's triumph when making his entry into the practically deserted city and ascending the battlements of the castle was undoubtedly tempered by feelings of regret and admiration for a fallen foe. His first action after the occupation of Jaisalmir was to give orders that the bodies of the Rawal Mulraj and Ratansi should be carried into the citadel, and burnt according to the rites of the Hindu faith within the walls they had so long and gallantly defended.

A small force was left behind to garrison Jaisalmir, and the Moslem commander then led his army back to the imperial headquarters at Ajmere.

Great as the conquest had been, the spoils of war brought by Mahbub to his sovereign were practically nil, every article of value in the Bhati capital, including even the gold and silver ornaments of the women, having been hidden or destroyed by the vanquished previous to the final sacrifice.

Ratansi's two sons were brought to the court by the Musulman general, who practically adopted them as his own children, a step which was in the future fraught with important consequences not only for Jaisalmir but for the entire empire of Delhi.

The conclusion of this campaign was simultaneous with the commencement of a new one led by the Emperor in person against the Sesodia kingdom of Mewar.

Campaign against Mewar.

Ala-ud-Din, in spite of a certain degree of culture, was in all essentials a typical Central Asian barbarian of the type of Ghenghis Khan. There was no restraining influence in his character, and any desire, however unjustifiable, which arose in his mind brought with it the unalterable resolve to gratify it at all costs.

This campaign owed its origin and the many romantic

incidents with which it abounded to one of the monarch's sudden wild impulses.

At this period, 1274, the Maharana of Mewar, Lakumsi by name, was still a minor, and his uncle Prince Bhimsi, a man of high character and ability, acted as regent.

Prince Bhimsi had some years previously married Padmini, the daughter of Hamir Sank, a Chauhan Rajput chief of Ceylon, a princess whose beauty was considered superior to that of any other woman in India. Her charms had been sung by every Hindu bard, from the Himalayas to the " Cape of the Virgin ",[1] and, as was only natural, the fame of her beauty in due course reached the court of Delhi. Ala-ud-Din instantly determined that this prize should be his, and sent a peremptory demand to Chitor that she should be surrendered to him.

The Regent met this insulting request with unhesitating refusal, whereupon the Emperor of Delhi invaded Mewar with the firm intention of attaining his object by force of arms.

Since the defeat of Kutub-ud-Din by Korumdevi Chalukya, the great kingdom of the Sesodias had remained unmolested, and it was toward Chitor that all the Rajput clans looked for leadership, for although, at a later period, the other principalities of Rajputana, Marwar, Amber, Bundi and Kotah rose to a position of equality with Mewar, they were at this time merely petty states some of which hardly counted at all.

A heavy burden of responsibility rested upon the shoulders of the Regent of Mewar, that of upholding Hindu independence and of maintaining unimpaired the integrity of the great heritage of which he was the custodian. Bhimsi determined to concentrate all the forces at his command upon the defence of Chitor and to put his trust in the impregnability of the rock-girt capital.

Meeting with no resistance, the Pathan and Tartar cavalry of Ala-ud-Din ravaged the towns and villages of Mewar and advanced to the foot of the gigantic isolated rock on which stood the temples, palaces and houses of the famous capital. Scaling ladders were placed against the precipitous slopes of the rock and, invoking Allah and the Prophet, the Moslems advanced to the assault, which was met by a volley of great stones, a storm of arrows and, most terrible of all, cauldrons of boiling oil.

The lapse of many weeks found Ala-ud-Din still held at bay and his army severely weakened.

[1] Cape Kumari or Comorin.

It was known to the Moslem sovereign that the fortress, at all times provisioned for a siege, could hold out successfully for a period of months, and, impatient of attaining his goal, he decided to resort to a plan of treachery by which he hoped to succeed more rapidly.

He sent a messenger into Chitor under a flag of truce bearing an autograph letter from him to the Regent in which he wrote that he had abandoned all thought of robbing Prince Bhimsi of the treasured wife he had so gallantly defended. He merely begged to be allowed to enter Chitor accompanied by one follower only and to have the happiness of seeing the reflection of Padmini's face in one of the mirrors of the palace.

That grace vouchsafed to him, he would retire from Mewar fully satisfied to have been permitted to behold a beauty renowned throughout the whole of India.

Ala-ud-Din had not underrated the innate chivalry of the Rajputs ; the fact that he was entrusting his life to the honour of his foes made a strong appeal to the Regent, who immediately granted his request.

At the appointed hour the Emperor, attended by one officer only, entered Chitor, where Prince Bhimsi received him with the utmost courtesy, and escorted him to one of the halls of his palace through which Padmini passed unveiled, her complete image being reflected in a large mirror facing the Emperor.

With every outward manifestation of gratitude, Ala-ud-Din now prepared to take his leave, but in truth this was the moment for the execution of the treacherous plan devised by him to gratify his unaltered desire.

The rules of Oriental hospitality demanded that Bhimsi should accompany his guest outside the gates of Chitor to the entrance of the Moslem camp. Some of his devoted adherents, to whom the treacherous character of the Emperor was well known, recalled to the Regent's mind the fact that Ala-ud-Din had ascended the throne over the dead body of his uncle and implored him to refrain from this act of courtesy.

Bhimsi met these appeals with the unhesitating reply that his honour as a Rajput demanded that he should place the same trust in the Emperor as he had placed in him, when proferring his request to enter Chitor.

Exchanging the most cordial words, the Emperor and the Regent descended the rock but, as they passed the lowest of the seven great gates which barred the approach

to the fortress city, a body of Pathan troops broke from the ambush where they had been concealed and, before Bhimsi could draw his sword in self-defence, overpowered him and carried him a prisoner to the Moslem encampment.

Immediately afterwards Ala-ud-Din sent a messenger with a letter to Padmini demanding her instant surrender as the price of her husband's release and declaring that a refusal on her part would result in the Regent being put to death.

A council in which all the leading nobles of the kingdom took part was at once held at the palace, and many hours were spent in painful debate on the two terrible alternatives —the life of the strong man who had so wisely and conscientiously steered his country through many dangers, or the sacrifice of the honour of his consort.

Padmini sought to facilitate the decision of the council by sending a message to the members announcing her readiness to go to the Moslem camp, and assuring them that she would carry on her person the means of protecting her honour, but even this heroic offer failed to bring about a definite result.

The Queen then summoned her uncle Gorah and his nephew Badal, two of the chiefs who were taking part in the council, to a private conference in her apartments, after which certain suggestions the Rani had made to her relatives were put before the general council and immediately adopted by them.

Padmini sent a message to Ala-ud-Din to the effect that she agreed to surrender herself upon two conditions—firstly, that she should be permitted a farewell interview of half an hour's duration with her husband; and secondly, that she should enter Delhi, not as a slave in the train of the conqueror but with all the state demanded by her high rank, and attended by the entire retinue of 700 slave girls who had followed her from Ceylon when she came as a bride to Chitor.

Ala-ud-Din, elated by his apparent success, and failing to realise the magnificent spirit of the women of Rajputana as compared to the submissiveness of the Georgian and Circassian slaves who filled the imperial harem at Delhi, agreed to these terms. At the appointed hour the great procession of palanquins containing the Queen and her attendants, each carried by six bearers, descended the steep path from Chitor to the Moslem camp. Closely veiled, Padmini issued from her litter and entered the tent in which Bhimsi was confined.

The stipulated half-hour having passed, Ala-ud-Din grew

impatient and was about to give orders that the interview must end, when suddenly the roll of the *naggaras* and the shrill note of the conches sounded from the walls of Chitor.

Led by Gorah and Badal, the defenders issued from the gates, and, calling on the goddess Bhavani, the protectress of their clan, swept down upon the Musulman camp.

Taken completely by surprise, the soldiers of Ala-ud-Din still retained their discipline and stood to arms awaiting the attack, when the same cry rang out again, this time from their very midst.

The palanquin bearers stood revealed as nobles of Mewar in shining armour, and a Sesodia clansman fully equipped for battle sprang from every litter.

The Moslems found themselves assailed, not only by the foes who had risen so unexpectedly in their midst, but also by the main body of the garrison of Chitor, and, but for their courage and the discipline exercised throughout their ranks, might easily have met with disaster.

The Rajputs had brought a horse with them from Chitor for the Regent, and very soon the voice of Bhimsi was heard cheering his soldiers to supreme effort, a proof that Padmini had succeeded in freeing him from bondage.

Ala-ud-Din's fury at the deception of which he had been a victim was intense, and he instantly gave orders for a strong body of cavalry to be detached from his army and to be posted at the foot of the ascent to the fortress, thus cutting off the Rajput retreat.

Gorah and his nephew recognised the peril, and, with the object of delaying the threatened attack upon the Regent and his Queen, and giving them time to escape, placed themselves at the head of 8000 clansmen and charged into the midst of the Moslem army.

Gorah fell mortally wounded early in the struggle, but the command was immediately taken by the twelve-year-old Badal, who, in spite of his youth, was already an experienced soldier.

The fierce battle continued, and when at length the young commander gave the order to retire, he himself was severely wounded and practically all the great chiefs of Mewar had laid down their lives ; but their heroic sacrifice had not been in vain, for whilst the fight was raging the Regent and his Queen had passed safely within the gates of Chitor.

The Khoman Rasa, the most ancient of the Bardic chronicles of Mewar, gives a dramatic account of the farewell interview between Badal and the widow of Gorah, who

before mounting the pyre of the *sati* begs him to describe to her her lord's part in the great battle. Badal answers: "He was the Reaper of the harvest of battle, he sleeps ringed about by his foes". The widow asks: "Tell me, Badal, how did my love behave?" He answers: "O Mother, how further describe his deeds, when he has left no foe to dread or admire him". The widow bids her nephew farewell and with the exclamation "My Lord will chide my delay", leaps into the flames.

Severe as the losses of the Rajputs had been, their enemies had suffered even more heavily and Ala-ud-Din was compelled to order a retreat to Delhi, realising with bitterness in his heart that the indomitable spirit of loyalty and self-sacrifice of the Rajputs had triumphed where his treacherous methods, though upheld by the bravery of his troops, had failed.

The Emperor attempted no further campaigns for five years after his failure at Chitor, but in the year 1297 an incident occurred which raised his hopes of realising the ambition he had secretly cherished ever since his invasion of Western India in command of his uncle's army—that of the subjugation of the great Hindu kingdom of Gujarat.

Baghela dynasty of Anhilvara.

With the death of Bhim Deo II. in 1215, the original line of the Gujarat Chalukyas came to an end and the throne passed to Lavanaprasada, head of the Baghela branch of the Chalukya clan, who had been minister during the reigns of the previous kings. He did not assume the royal title but was known merely as Ranaka or Chief.

He died in 1233 and was succeeded by his son Viradhavala (1233–1238), during whose reign his two ministers, the celebrated Jain brothers Vastupala and Tejapala, played such a distinguished part, so much so that their exploits in war and their statecraft generally fill the annals of Hindu Gujarat, and their memory is still held in reverence by the Jains throughout India.

Viradhavala had originally been adopted by Bhim Deo II. as his legal heir, but in spite of this he followed his father's example and ascended the throne under the more modest title of Ranaka in preference to that of Maharaja. When, at his death, his son Visaladeva (1238–1261) succeeded him, the fact that this monarch had, from the very commencement of his reign, to fight for his kingdom against his brother Pratamalla, who put in a rival claim and who was supported in it by Tejapala, now of great age but still aspiring to be the power behind the Baghela throne, altered the existing

position materially and brought what can best be described as an intermediate period to an end.

Visaladeva[1] gained a complete victory over his brother and in 1243 was publicly enthroned, assuming his full title of Maharajadhiraja or King of Kings.

This monarch was succeeded by his nephew Arjun Deo (1261–1274), who was in due course followed by his son Sarang Deo (1275–1296), and during the reigns of these sovereigns the integrity of the kingdom was fully maintained and all the former glory of Anhilvara revived.

On the death of Sarang Deo the throne of Gujarat passed to his son Karan Deo, whose accession thus took place just one year after Ala-ud-Din had been proclaimed Emperor at Delhi.

Karan Deo was a man of weak and unbalanced character, by nature a coward and yet capable of occasional courageous efforts; his subjects, quick to realise his failings, named him, almost from the moment of his accession, Ghelo or the Insane. Deficient also morally, it was this side of his nature which eventually brought ruin to him and his line and to the country over which he governed.

Karan Deo had conceived a violent admiration for the beautiful wife of his chief minister, a Brahmin named Madhava. The Brahmini yielded to his advances, but after a while the intrigue became known to Madhava, who determined to wreak terrible punishment upon the guilty.

Fall of Anhilvara.

Ala-ud-Din's successful raid on the neighbouring kingdom of Devagiri was well known to him and he probably suspected the Moslem monarch of designs upon Gujarat. Sacrificing his country to his thirst for revenge, he repaired to Delhi and, seeking audience with the Emperor, extolled the richness and beauty of the Baghela dominions and finally offered his services to Ala-ud-Din in any attempt he wished to make to conquer them.

The Emperor's answer was a foregone conclusion. He immediately assembled a great army which he placed under the command of his brother Alaf Khan, with another of his most loyal adherents, Nasrat Khan Jalesari, as second in command, and appointed the Brahmin Madhava their civil assistant. The task before Alaf Khan turned out to be a far easier one than could have been expected. Karan Deo made practically no effort to defend his kingdom, and the

[1] The colloquial form Bisal Deo for this name has been avoided here to prevent confusion between the Gujarat prince and his namesake the Chauhan.

Moslems, advancing over the fertile plains of Gujarat, entered Anhilvara unopposed. As the invaders approached the capital, the despicable monarch fled, taking with him his two daughters only and leaving his wives and slave girls and the whole of the state treasure to the mercy of the Mohammedans.

From the capital Alaf Khan pressed forward to the great port of Cambay, the commercial metropolis of Gujarat and one of the wealthiest cities in India. Here, in addition to levying a very heavy ransom upon the citizens, he forced a local merchant to make over to him a eunuch slave named Kafur, who proved in the future a most valuable asset to the Moslem Emperor.

Madhava's vengeance was complete. The man who had brought him dishonour had lost his throne and was a homeless fugitive, and his kingdom, as one of the Hindu states, had ceased to exist.

The Moslem now ruled in Gujarat, and many centuries were to come and go before the ancient land of Anhilvara would again welcome a Hindu sovereign in its midst.

The necessary arrangements having been made for the administration of the conquered territories, Alaf Khan led his army back to Delhi, where he was enthusiastically welcomed by his imperial brother.

Ala-ud-Din distributed the female captives and a large portion of the treasure obtained in Gujarat amongst his officers and soldiers, reserving for himself Kamala Devi, of whom he had become deeply enamoured at first sight, and who was one of the principal wives of the unfortunate Karan Deo and the mother of the two daughters who had accompanied him on his flight.

The Rajput princess, who combined great beauty with the high spirit of her race, had probably learnt to despise the weakling to whom she had been married and felt more in sympathy with the ruthless conqueror whose prisoner she was.

Certain it is that her influence over Ala-ud-Din became so great that shortly after her arrival in Delhi he determined to regard her previous marriage as non-existent and publicly espoused her with all the rites of the Mohammedan faith. This marriage, the first on record between a Musulman and a Hindu princess was, as we shall see later on, destined to bring important consequences in its train. The return of Alaf Khan and his army from Gujarat was well timed, for hardly had the rejoicings over his victory reached

their conclusion, than Northern India found itself again invaded by a Mongol army of 200,000 horsemen commanded by a chieftain named Kutlugh Khan. The raiders swept over the fertile plains of the Punjab, leaving ruin and devastation in their wake, and the many thousand helpless peasants who were driven from their homes fled towards Delhi, hoping to find refuge within its walls. This sudden influx of refugees to a city already so densely populated brought Delhi face to face with famine, a danger which grew daily as the Mongol hordes continued their advance towards her gates. It was on occasions such as this that the finer and nobler elements in the character of Ala-ud-Din rose to the surface.

Scorning the advice of his ministers, who urged him to consider his personal safety by abandoning the capital and retreating to a point farther south where he could concentrate his forces in a supreme effort to expel the invaders, he elected to defend Delhi, and with this purpose summoned all available reinforcements and, placing himself at the head of his troops, marched out to meet his foes.

A fierce and long-sustained fight took place almost under the walls of the city and for some considerable time the issue hung in the balance, the numerical superiority of the Indians being counteracted by the greater mobility, owing to their cavalry, of the Mongols.

Finally, however, the brilliant leadership of the Emperor brought decisive victory to his arms, and the invaders fled over the frontier in rapid and disorderly retreat. The results of their invasion, beyond the misery and devastation which it had caused, were vastly to increase the popularity and prestige of the Indian monarch. The first desire which came to Ala-ud-Din after this great achievement was to emulate the great Macedonian whose title he had adopted by attempting world conquest and also to found a new religion. These dreams, however, were abandoned in the year 1300 in favour of a campaign directed against the almost impregnable fortress of Rintambhur, situated in the territory of the Kachwaha Rajputs of Amber.

Campaign against Amber Rajputs.

In the course of this expedition a dramatic incident occurred, which gives convincing proof of the Emperor's power to hold the allegiance of his army. The Rajputs of Rintambhur defended their fortress with all the valour of their race, and during one of many fruitless attacks the Emperor, who was attended by his uncle Rukn Khan, fell from his horse severely wounded. Rukn Khan, who had

for some time cherished designs upon his nephew's throne, thought the moment ripe to put them into execution. Leaving the Emperor on the field, he at once galloped back to the Musulman camp and announced to all that Ala-ud-Din had been slain and that he was now their rightful sovereign. He was immediately enthroned as Emperor in presence of the entire army, when, just as the ceremony was proceeding, a shout of acclamation rose from the assembled troops and Ala-ud-Din, swaying in his saddle from loss of blood, rode into the camp. The would-be Emperor attempted to escape, but was pursued and eventually brought back to camp, when he was instantly beheaded by order of Ala-ud-Din. The fort of Rintambhur was taken by storm, and Ala-ud-Din sullied his victory by mercilessly putting to death all of the gallant defenders who fell into his hands.

The capture of Rintambhur gave him the key to Rajputana, and with this success the desire to avenge his defeat at Chitor, which had never ceased to rankle within him, and to humble the pride of the woman who had successfully defied him, took possession of his soul. The Maharana Lakumsi, who was now of age and had assumed the reins of government, at once summoned all his vassals to Chitor and accepted the challenge. Attended by their sub-vassals and clansmen, the Rajput feudatories flocked to his banner and the little dark-skinned Bhil bowmen of the Aravalli Mountains, who in times of peace could not desist from raiding the fertile pastures of Mewar, rallied to their overlord in his hour of peril and harassed the advance of the invaders as they attempted to emerge from the passes.

Fall of Chitor.

From the first the issue of the struggle seemed to be a foregone conclusion, for the Sesodia kingdom had not recovered from the severe losses in man-power and resources generally, inflicted by the invasion of 1295.

The Rajputs once again put up a magnificent defence, but all heroism was unavailing and Ala-ud-Din succeeded in capturing a hill which partially dominated the fortress from the southern side and upon which he planted his *munjaneekas*, giant slings resembling the balistae of the Romans. From that moment the fate of the great fortress and of every soul within its walls was sealed.

Tod, in his classic of Rajputana, has painted a wonderful picture of the last days, too lengthy to quote here, in which he describes the dream of the Maharana, to whom the tutelary goddess of the Sesodias appears with the terrible

command that all his twelve sons must give up their lives for Chitor ; then the heroic rivalry between the brothers as to which shall be the first to offer the supreme sacrifice, and the successful escape of the Maharana's favourite son, Prince Ajaisi, from the doomed city, so that the line of Rama may not become extinct.

The closing scene of this moving tragedy took place in the famous rock-hewn subterranean palace so intimately associated both with the history and legend of Mewar. Here an immense funeral pyre was erected, to which a procession composed of the entire female population of Chitor, from the wives and daughters of the greatest chiefs to those of the humblest clansmen, moved with dignified step. Padmini herself brought up the rear.

Proud and defiant to the end, her final command before crossing the threshold was that the entrance should be walled up immediately she had passed through it so that even her ashes should remain inviolate. Immediately following upon the self-chosen death of the women, the Rajputs, animated by one desire only, that of joining those dear to them in the " Mansions of the Sun ", sallied forth from the gates of Chitor led by the Maharana and Prince Bhimsi and, in a final struggle with their foes, perished to a man. It was over their dead bodies that Ala-ud-Din rode up the steep ascent and through the seven monumental gateways into the silent city of Chitor, where the only sound that met his ear was the beat of his horses' hoofs echoing through the deserted streets.

Sullen in his victory because of his inability to humilate the enemy, Ala-ud-Din gave orders that Chitor should be razed to the ground.

During his progress through the city he paused in front of the palace of Prince Bhimsi, where years earlier he had beheld Padmini's face in a mirror, and it would seem almost as though some gentler memory had stirred the heart of the conqueror and kindled in it some feeling of remorse, for he commanded that the place she had dwelt in should alone be spared from the general destruction.

Renewed invasion by Mongols.

The government of Mewar was conferred by the Emperor upon Mal Deo of Jhalore, a Rajput chief of the Chauhan clan who had not raised any objection to being his vassal, after which he returned to Delhi, where his presence was urgently needed to quell a sudden invasion by 200,000 Mongol horsemen.

This incursion would have been easily dealt with, but for

the absence of a considerable portion of the imperial army in the Deccan, where a campaign was in progress against the Hindus of Telingana or Warangal, ruled over by princes of the Kakatiya dynasty, who claimed descent from the ancient Andhras.

Laying waste the country through which they passed, the raiders had penetrated almost up to the walls of Delhi, when suddenly they withdrew, either because they were seized with panic or because, having gained all the plunder they coveted, they were satisfied to retire.

In 1305 a fresh Mongol invasion ordered by the ruler of Transoxiana took place, and an army of 50,000 men, led by one of his generals, Aibak by name, marched into the Punjab.

The invaders were met by Ghazi Beg Tughlak, Governor of the Punjab, one of the bravest and most distinguished soldiers of the empire, who at the head of his troops gave battle to the enemy on the banks of the Indus.

The Mongols met with complete disaster, and of the great force which had penetrated into the Punjab, only a small remnant returned to their own country. The greater part had perished on the field, and the prisoners, numbering approximately 3000, were sent to Delhi, where Ala-ud-Din, with atrocious cruelty, ordered the officers to be trampled to death by elephants and the soldiers to be beheaded, their skulls afterwards being built up into pyramids as a warning to future invaders.

Undeterred by these atrocities, or possibly even roused to renewed effort by feelings of revenge, the Mongols shortly afterwards again invaded India, and were immediately defeated by Ghazi Beg Tughlak, who pursued them into Afghanistan and succeeded in capturing both Kabul and Ghazni.

A heavy annual tribute was demanded from these cities in the name of Ala-ud-Din, and for many years afterwards no further Mongol invasion was attempted on Indian soil.

Bhati restoration in Jaisalmir.

The battle of the Indus had not only been noteworthy because of the disaster it brought to the Mongols; it was instrumental in bringing about a great change in the fortunes of the Bhati Rajputs of Jaisalmir.

Mahbub Khan had been faithful to the promise given to his friend Ratansi, and in his house the two young descendants of Krishna had been carefully nurtured in the Hindu faith by Brahmin pandits, a fact which did not prevent them from growing up on terms of brotherly

intimacy with their Musulman protector's two sons, Zulfikar and Ghazi Khan.

Mahbub Khan had been dead for some years before the Mongol invasion of 1305, but when his sons were summoned by Ghazi Beg Tughlak to join his standard it seemed quite natural that the young Prince Gharsi—his brother had meanwhile been allowed to go on a visit to Jaisalmir—should accompany them.

In the struggle which took place the Bhati prince was so conspicuous for his courage, and rendered such valuable services against the Mongols, that when he returned to Delhi with the Moslem army Ala-ud-Din, to mark his appreciation, not only invested him with a robe of honour but handed him a patent which restored to him all the ancestral dominions of his house as a feudatory of the empire.

Gharsi was installed upon the throne of his forefathers amidst the rejoicings of his clansmen, and ever since that day the standard of the Bhatis has continued to fly over the battlements of Jaisalmir.

Events in the Deccan.

The Mongol peril removed, Ala-ud-Din felt free to employ his army on fresh undertakings, and for more reasons than one he turned his attention towards the Deccan.

Kamala Devi, his consort, formerly the Queen of Karan Deo Baghela, had adapted herself to life at the court of Delhi and was happy there, but she longed greatly for the sight of Devaladevi, the younger of the two daughters who had, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, accompanied her father on his flight from Anhilvara. The elder daughter had died some years before, and Devaladevi and Karan Deo Baghela were now refugees in the wild mountains of Baglan in the district of Nasik.

Anxious to fulfil Kamala Devi's wish, Ala-ud-Din instructed Alaf Khan, his viceroy in Gujarat, to demand from the fugitive king the surrender of his daughter. On this occasion Karan Deo, usually so irresolute, adopted a very different attitude. Devaladevi was, like her mother, endowed with great beauty, and many of the neighbouring princes, attracted by her charms, had sought her in marriage.

Shankar Deo, Ala-ud-Din's former opponent and heir apparent of Devagiri, had been foremost amongst her suitors, but had been rejected by her father as being a Mahratta, whose descent from Krishna was not absolutely undisputed.

Faced with the danger of having his daughter wrested from him by the " Toork ", the ex-king of Anhilvara decided

to accept Shankar Deo as a son-in-law as a means of keeping his daughter near him. Escorted by a strong body of Rajput cavalry, the princess started for Devagiri, but, at a point situated at approximately eight miles from the celebrated cave temples of Ellora, they came upon a party of about 300 of Alaf Khan's troopers who had been visiting the shrines.

The Moslems, quick to realise the prize which a lucky chance had cast into their path, instantly attacked the Rajput escort and after a furious hand-to-hand struggle, in which the princess's horse was killed under her, succeeded in taking her captive.

Alaf Khan received his fair prisoner most courteously and despatched her under a safe escort to Delhi.

Born in a land in which the memory of the destruction of Somnath by Mahmud the Image Breaker still lingered, brought up by her father to hate the Toork as the greatest foe of her line and race, bitterness must have been uppermost in Devaladevi's heart as she approached the imperial city, mingled perhaps with a scarcely recognised longing to see the mother she had been parted from in her earliest youth. Only a few days, however, after her arrival in Delhi, her feelings underwent a complete change. A chance meeting took place between the Princess and the Crown Prince Khizr Khan, the Emperor's eldest son, and the young couple fell in love at first sight.

The heir apparent lost no time in seeking his father's and his stepmother's consent to their marriage, and Ala-ud-Din, whose affection for his children was one of the few really human traits in his character, immediately agreed to it, a course which was naturally warmly welcomed by Kamala Devi, who thus saw her daughter united to the court of Delhi by the closest ties.

The marriage was almost immediately celebrated amidst scenes of great splendour, and was immortalised by the poet Amir Khusru in what is still considered one of his finest poems, entitled " Khizr Khan and Dewal Rani ".

At this period the eunuch slave Kafur, whom Alaf Khan had taken from the merchant at Cambay in 1297, commenced to play a part at the court.

Ala-ud-Din had been quick to recognise his great ability, and at the same time came the conviction that in the person of the slave, a Hindu convert to Islam, he possessed a human instrument useful in the carrying out of his policy and a military genius of the highest order.

In the year 1306 he despatched Malik Kafur, the title under which the slave subsequently became known, at the head of an army of over 100,000 horsemen to the Deccan to demand the annual tribute from Ram Deo of Devagiri, then three years in arrear.

The Maharaja was not in a position to offer any resistance to such a force, and Malik Kafur advanced unopposed to Devagiri, where he was received with the full honours due to him as an imperial general. His talents as a diplomatist were amply proved by the fact that he not only obtained prompt and full payment of the tribute but also succeeded in persuading Ram Deo to accompany him on his return to Delhi.

Ala-ud-Din had the best reasons for receiving the Yadava prince with the utmost courtesy, which he emphasised by conferring on him titles of the highest rank, an estate in Northern India, and by paying all the expenses of his journey back to Devagiri.

Conquest of the Far South by Malik Kafur.

By these means the authority of the house of Khilji was firmly established over the whole of Western India, and the "Second Alexander" was now able to concentrate his lust for conquest upon the Hoysala-Ballala kingdom of Mysore, and upon the Pandya, Chola and Chera kingdoms of the Far South, where so far no Musulman soldier had yet set foot.

The first step towards the achievement of these far-reaching plans was taken in the year 1309, when Malik Kafur headed an expedition against the Kakatiyas of Telingana, who had been successful in repelling the earlier attack of 1303.

This time a prolonged siege resulted in the capture of the fortress, and the city of Warangal was forced to surrender. The Raja Rudra Deo was compelled to pay tribute to Delhi, and this left the way free for an advance farther south, which took place in the following year.

Malik Kafur was given supreme command of the army and was accompanied by the state canopy of royal red as an additional symbol of his authority. He proceeded first to Devagiri, intending to make that city his base, but found that the Maharaja Ram Deo had died a short time before and that Shankar Deo, who had succeeded him, was not likely to receive in a friendly spirit the representative of the sovereign who had robbed him of his bride.

For the moment Shankar Deo feared to give open proof of his hostility and the Moslems advanced unresisted to the

Mysore Plateau. The whole of the rich kingdom of the Hoysalas was speedily overrun and its splendid capital Dwarasamudra occupied, the famous Temple of Siva, still one of the most beautiful shrines in India, being seriously damaged.

The reigning Hoysala king, Vira Ballala III., was taken prisoner and was compelled, in addition, to acknowledge the suzerainty of Delhi, to surrender to Malik Kafur a ransom of 312 elephants, 20,000 horses and 96,000 maunds of gold.

From Dwarasamudra the Moslem commander pressed on into the centre of the Tamil South. The leadership of the historic " Three Kingdoms " had at that time passed from the Cholas of Tanjore to the Pandyas of Madura, and it was against the ancient city of Madura, the centre of Tamil civilisation, culture and art, that Malik Kafur now directed his forces.

The Pandya kings had been extremely powerful, but when Malik Kafur invaded their country much of their strength had been dissipated by civil war between two rival claimants to the throne. Madura was an easy conquest for Ala-ud-Din's crafty general, who promptly conferred the kingship upon Vira, one of the contending princes and the illegitimate son of the late king, who thus became a vassal of the empire of Delhi.

From the Pandya capital the Moslems continued their victorious progress on to the Far South of the Carnatic, and it was only when they reached " Adam's Bridge ", within easy distance of Ceylon, that Malik Kafur called a halt.

Here on the island of Rameshvaram, under the walls of the Temple of Rama, supposed to have been erected by the hero himself to commemorate his rescue of Sita, the Moslem commander caused a small mosque to be built in which he gave orders that the Kutba should be read in the name of his sovereign, as a symbol of the triumph of Islam over Hinduism.

Thus the great task inaugurated by Shahab-ud-Din of Ghor had been completed by Ala-ud-Din Khilji, and the Musulman rule extended from Delhi directly or indirectly over the entire peninsula of India from the Himalayas to the Cape of Comorin.

Moslem rule supreme throughout India.

Malik Kafur now returned to Delhi, where he was received with wellnigh royal honours by his grateful master, who conferred upon his former slave the title of Taj-ul-Mulk or " Crown of the State ", and appointed him Wazir of the empire.

The immense spoils brought back from the south combined with the tribute from the subjugated Hindu states provided Ala-ud-Din's artistic sense with the means to embellish his capital. He erected splendid mosques, theological colleges and almshouses in Delhi, but the greatest architectural achievement of his reign was the magnificent gateway at the Kuwat-ul-Islam mosque named after him the Alai Darwarza, still considered one of the most beautiful features of the city.

Great as Ala-ud-Din had made his empire, it was in truth held together only by the power of the sword and by the fear which his merciless treatment of any who opposed him had inspired even in his own subjects.

The Moslems groaned under the weight of taxation imposed upon them for the upkeep of the enormous imperial armies, and the Hindus, though cowed into submission, could not do other than loathe the man who had instituted the infamous *jiziya* or poll-tax on every member of their faith.

Events at Delhi.

With increasing age and the decline in health due largely to the excesses of his youth, the inborn cruelty of the Emperor became more and more apparent. It is strikingly shown in his treatment of a Mongol chief and 3000 officers and soldiers, who, after the defeat of the Mongols in 1292 by Jelal-ud-Din, had entered his service, had adopted Islam and become known as the New Musulmans.

These numbers had been added to from time to time by prisoners taken during different raids, and in due course they and their families were given a special suburb of Delhi known as Moghulpur, where they were allowed to reside. These Central Asian mercenaries had not wavered in their allegiance to Ala-ud-Din, but he suddenly conceived violent feelings of distrust and dislike for them and without hesitation dismissed them from his service. These measures brought the Mongols face to face with starvation and the more desperate spirits amongst them entered into a conspiracy against the life of the Emperor.

Rumours of this plot reached Ala-ud-Din and, glad of an excuse, he ordered Moghulpur to be surrounded and the entire male population to be massacred by the imperial troops. The wives and the children were dragged from their homes and exposed in the market-place of Delhi to be sold as slaves.

This terrible act of cruelty was practically the last executed by direct command of the Emperor, as very

soon afterwards he became afflicted with chronic dropsy and Malik Kafur became the ruling power behind the throne.

With the knowledge that the iron hand of the oppressor had lost its grip, the Hindus no longer attempted to conceal their hatred and their thirst for revenge. In 1312 Shankar Deo of Devagiri headed a revolt in the Deccan and, though it was rapidly crushed and its leader executed, it was promptly followed by a far more serious rising which started in the centre of Mewar.

Hindu revolts: restoration of Mewar.

Prince Ajaisi, the only son of the Maharana Lakumsi to survive the fall of Chitor, had died some time previous to the events we are about to record and his successor upon the throne of Mewar was his nephew Prince Hamir, son of his eldest brother Prince Arsi and his wife, a peasant girl of the Chauhan clan.

Hamir's childhood had been spent almost entirely at his mother's home, and it was not until after the disaster of 1303, when he had accompanied Ajaisi to his refuge at Kailwara, that he came more to the front.

From the moment of his accession to the purely nominal honours of Mewar, Prince Hamir started a series of raids into the plains governed by the Emperor's viceroy, Mal Deo of Jhalore, and, finding encouragement in the attitude of the population, ran no risk of being captured. At length Mal Deo, seeing no possibility of defeating his enemy by force of arms, attempted to humiliate him by other means. He despatched an envoy to Kailwara bearing the cocoanut, the Rajput symbol of marriage, and offering Prince Hamir the hand of his daughter.

The chief supporters of the heir of Mewar advised him against acceptance of the cocoanut, but the young prince decided to retain it and in reply to their arguments said: "My feet shall at least ascend the rocky steps trodden by my ancestors".[1]

On the day fixed by the astrologers as the auspicious hour, the bridegroom arrived at Chitor, but instead of the Torun or Marriage Arch over the gateway and the bevy of laughing Rajputnis in readiness to defend it by pelting him with crimson palasa powder, he found a city silent and desolate and Mal Deo and his son with grave faces ready to receive him and lead him into the halls of the palace of his ancestors, still bearing traces of the havoc wrought there when the fortress had fallen. Though somewhat awed by

[1] Tod's *Rajasthan*, vol. i. p. 219.

this strange reception, Hamir did not protest and shortly afterwards the bride, closely veiled, entered the hall and the marriage rites were duly performed.

After the ceremony the newly wedded pair withdrew to the apartments allotted to them and Hamir, anxious to behold the face of his bride, begged her to remove her veil. The face revealed to him was not lacking in beauty and in charm, but it was clouded by an expression of such intense sadness that he gently asked her to tell him the cause of her sorrow.

To this question she replied that Hamir had been betrayed and that she was a widow. The remarriage of a Hindu widow being looked upon in those days, as it is at the present time, as a violation of the most sacred religious and social laws of orthodox Hinduism, Mal Deo had by this betrayal hoped to strike a deadly blow at the unique position occupied by the dynasty of Bappa Rawal amongst all the Rajput clans.

At first Hamir seemed stunned at this revelation, but when the newly wedded bride told him that her first marriage to a Bhati chief had taken place when she was still in her infancy and that she had never even beheld her husband's face, his feelings of horror turned to pity for her plight, and this, coupled with the admiration which her beauty had aroused in him, made such an appeal to his chivalry that he accepted her confession with gentleness and affection, where she had expected reproaches and curses.

Overwhelmed with gratitude, the young Rajputni fell on her knees before him and fervently promised that her one aim in life should be to install him upon the throne of his forefathers. Hamir returned to Kailwara without making any reference to Mal Deo of the deception practised upon him, and about a year later his consort bore him a son who was named Kaitsi.

Shortly afterwards the Rani announced her desire to take her child to Chitor to lay him on the altar of the tutelary deity of his race. She selected a moment for the carrying out of this plan when she knew her father and the greater part of his army to be absent on a punitive expedition against the wild tribes of Merwara and arrived at Chitor with her infant, attended only by an officer named Jal, a Jain of the Mehta tribe and a loyal adherent of the Sesodias. As soon as she found herself within the walls of the city, the princess proceeded to the spot where the small garrison of troops left to protect the fortress were quartered. Flinging back her

veil she made an inspiring appeal to them to desert the Toork and to rally round the standard of Hindupati. The soldiers, mostly Rajput and therefore at heart loathing this servitude to the Musulman, stirred by the impassioned words of the princess, came over in a body to the Sesodia cause.

The gates of the fortress were thrown open to admit Hamir, who once again rode into Chitor, this time in triumph. When, a few days later, Mal Deo and his troops returned, they were received with a volley of bullets from *arabas* (a kind of arquebus) and the Sun banner of the Sesodias was flying from the citadel. Mal Deo, deserted by many of his followers, amongst these his eldest son Banbir, who offered their allegiance to Hamir, fled to the Emperor at Delhi.

The restoration of the ancient royal house in Mewar kindled into flame the smouldering fire of hatred amongst all the Hindu states against the Khilji dynasty. Gujarat broke into rebellion and promptly defeated the troops sent to quell the uprising. The revolt spread to the neighbouring country of Devagiri, where Harpal Deo, Shankar Deo's brother-in-law, took the field against the imperial forces.

When the news of these disasters reached Ala-ud-Din, then a dying man, the Emperor, to quote the words of Ferishta, " bit his own flesh with fury ".

Death of Ala-ud-Din. Revolution at Delhi.

Malik Kafur, who had been sovereign in all but name for some time past, thought to perpetuate his power by placing a child ruler on the throne. By his orders the Crown Prince Khizr Khan and the Emperor's second son were imprisoned, and when, on December 19, 1316, Ala-ud-Din breathed his last, the minister's plans were fully completed and a document was produced which was generally accepted as the deceased sovereign's will in which he nominated his fourth son Prince Shahab-ud-Din Umar as heir to the imperial throne under the regency of Malik Kafur.

Prince Umar, a mere child at the time, was immediately proclaimed Emperor ; the unfortunate Khizr Khan and his younger brother were both blinded by order of the Regent, who further sent some of his most trusted followers to murder Prince Mubarak, Ala-ud-Din's third son, whom Malik Kafur feared more than the others as a possible rival.

Mubarak showed great presence of mind in the face of danger and succeeded in saving his life by bribing his would-be murderers, to whom he made a present of his valuable jewels.

A fight ensued between them over the rich spoil and the

Accession of Mubarak Khilji.

uproar was heard by Malik Mashir, captain of the royal guards and a loyal adherent of the house of Khilji. Led by him, the guards penetrated into the apartments of Malik Kafur and put him to death, instantly afterwards proclaiming Prince Mubarak Emperor in place of the child Umar. The commencement of the new reign, which was made the occasion for the passing of some wise laws and the release of many captives who had been unjustly imprisoned by Ala-ud-Din, at first gave promise of a more peaceful and benevolent era, but soon these hopes were dashed to the ground and it became obvious that Mubarak had inherited all the viciousness and cruelty of his father without a tithe of his strength and ability. A rebellion in the Deccan, which broke out in 1318, was crushed with merciless severity, and its unhappy leader, Harpal Deo, was taken prisoner and flayed alive.

From that moment the career of Mubarak presents a long series of acts of cruelty and of vice. One of the chief recreations indulged in by this utterly decadent sovereign was to dress himself as a woman and dance in company of the public nautch girls of Delhi at the houses of the various nobles. His principal tool in the barbarities which he committed, and his boon companion in the orgies in which he revelled, was a low-caste Hindu convert to Islam, named Hasan, whom he ennobled with the title of Nasir-ud-Din Khusru Khan.

This man, in whom his sovereign placed such implicit confidence, was possessed of relentless strength and cunning in addition to boundless ambition. His acceptance of Islam was merely the cloak under which he concealed his deadly hatred of the faith and his determination to overthrow it at all costs in favour of Hinduism. There were not wanting in Delhi genuinely loyal members of the court who warned the monarch of the true character of the favourite ; notable amongst these was the Emperor's former tutor, Kazi Zia-ud-Din, one of the most learned Musulman judges in the city, but Mubarak was so completely under Khusru's influence that, far from listening to the honest counsel of those who sought to protect him, he actually put Nasir-ud-Din Khusru Khan on his guard and, as a crowning folly, granted him permission to recruit a force of 20,000 Hindus of his own caste, the Parvari, from Gujarat, nominally for the imperial service.

Fall of the Khilji dynasty. Usurpation of Khusru Khan.

This force was placed under the command of certain Hindu relatives of the favourite, and in addition Khusru persuaded the Emperor to give him the keys of the inner

palace in order that he should be able to hold nocturnal conferences with his relatives on affairs of state. This concession sealed the Emperor's doom. The night of March 24, 1321, was fixed upon by the conspirators for the execution of their plot. The faithful Kazi Zia-ud-Din, his heart heavy with apprehension, decided to inspect the guards on duty at the palace at midnight and to plead with them for even more than wonted vigilance.

While going his rounds he was accosted by Mundal, an uncle of Khusru and himself one of the plotters, who engaged him in conversation ; this gave another of the conspirators named Jahirba the opportunity to creep up behind and to deal the aged Kazi a mortal blow with a scimitar. With the cry of " Treachery " upon his lips the old man fell to the ground, and now, led by Mundal and Jahirba, the main body of the conspirators forced their way into the inner apartments of the palace. Meanwhile the favourite was as usual in attendance upon the monarch in the imperial bedchamber, and Mubarak, hearing the tumult, ordered Khusru to find out the cause and report to him. Even in this hour of extreme danger the conspirator succeeded in temporarily lulling the Emperor's suspicions by assuring him, after a short absence, that the noise he had heard was due to some of the imperial horses having broken loose.

However, renewed shouts and the unmistakable clash of steel at last opened Mubarak's eyes to the fact that he had been betrayed, and he attempted to make his escape into the harem. Khusru, however, threw off the mask he had worn so long, and seizing the Emperor by the hair, held him until the other conspirators had reached the apartments, when he was thrown down and put to death by them. His head was afterwards severed from his body and flung into the courtyard below.

The apartments of the other princes in the palace were raided by bands of armed Parvaris and all the sons of Ala-ud-Din from Khizr Khan, the eldest, to the youngest, still an infant, were massacred in cold blood.

The male element disposed of, the women were dragged from the shelter of the harem and distributed by Khusru amongst his low-born relatives, the favourite reserving for himself Devaladevi the beautiful widow of Khizr Khan.

At dawn the conspirators proceeded in a body to the Diwan-i-Am, where Khusru, ascending the throne, was acclaimed Emperor under the title of Nasir-ud-Din Khusru Shah.

Delhi now suffered a reign of terror such as she had never before experienced. Nobles of the former court, suspected of being unfavourably disposed to the new rule, were arrested by bands of armed Parvaris and imprisoned, and the women belonging to the highest Moslem families were forcibly removed from their homes and carried as slaves to the harems of the tyrant and of his principal supporters. Outwardly still conforming to the Mohammedan religion and adopting the title of " Prince of True Believers ", Nasir-ud-Din Khusru let no opportunity go by of insulting and ridiculing the faith which at heart he hated.

He regularly on every Friday, the Musulman Sabbath, attended the great mosque in state as any orthodox ruler would have done, but the *Mihrab* of the sacred building (the prayer niche), which was, by all tenets of the religion, to be kept free from any sort of idol, was desecrated by his orders by images of Vishnu, Siva and the elephant-headed Ganesa. The luckless Musulman population of Delhi endured this terrible condition of affairs until August, fully four months, when suddenly a deliverer came in the person of Ghazi Beg Tughlak, the victor of the Indus.

Still retaining his loyalty to the house of Khilji, Ghazi Beg Tughlak assembled his forces and, acting in concert with certain other provincial governors, marched upon the capital.

Nasir-ud-Din Khusru was not a coward and, placing himself at the head of his troops, gave battle to Ghazi Beg Tughlak on the banks of the Saraswati on August 22, 1321.

His low-caste Parvaris and the pampered palace guards were, however, no match for the hardy veterans commanded by Ghazi Beg Tughlak, who very soon routed them ; and Khusru, realising his defeat, took refuge in a tomb close by, where he was discovered by his enemies and promptly executed for his crimes.

On the following day, August 23, the keys of Delhi were presented to Ghazi Beg Tughlak by a deputation of nobles and he made his entry on horseback into the city hailed by all, high and low, rich and poor alike, as their liberator from the hands of the tyrant.

Death of Khusru : election of Ghazi Beg Tughlak as Emperor.

On arriving at the Imperial Palace of the Thousand Minarets, he dismounted from his horse, and when informed that not one single member of the family he had served so faithfully survived, he burst into tears and entreated the nobles to elect a new sovereign from amongst themselves to whom he could swear allegiance. His words were drowned

by the shouts of the multitude, who acclaimed him as their rightful sovereign by virtue of his having so often saved them from the Mongols and having now delivered them from a tyranny far worse.

His officers, raising him on their shoulders, carried him into the Diwan-i-Am [1] and, placing him on the throne, proclaimed him Emperor of Hindustan with the title of Shah Jehan.

The curse of Sidi Mowla, the dervish, when being led to execution, calling down vengeance upon Jelal-ud-Din and all his descendants, had thus found fulfilment: the line of Khilji had been wiped off the earth and a new Turki dynasty, that of Tughlak, followed in its wake.

[1] Hall of Public Audience, as distinct from the Diwan-i-Khas, or Hall of Private Audience.

CHAPTER VI

SHIFTING SCENES, A.D. 1321–1524

Ghazi Beg Tughlak was of humble origin, his father being the Turki slave of Ghiyas-ud-Din Balban, and his mother a Hindu captive. It was typical of his retiring nature that, when ascending the throne of Delhi, he refused to assume the title of Shah Jehan (King of the World), by which the populace had hailed him, preferring the more modest designation of Ghiyas-ud-Din Tughlak.

Under his wise and benevolent rule the empire recovered quickly from the suffering caused by Khusru's reign of terror. The buildings of the capital were restored, the city generally improved and the civil and criminal codes of law established on a reformed and sounder basis.

The imperial authority over the territories in Western and Southern India conquered by Ala-ud-Din had, however, been considerably weakened by the fall of the house of Khilji and the four months of anarchy following upon the death of Mubarak.

Further Hindu revolts.

Devagiri's attempt to repudiate its allegiance was of no importance and was promptly followed by an offer of submission, but the Hindus of Warangal, under the command of their Raja, Rudra Deo, determined to fight for their independence to the end.

Ghiyas-ud-Din fully realised the formidable nature of the revolt and sent an army, commanded by his eldest son Prince Fakhr-ud-Din Juna Khan, against the Kakahtiya kingdom.

The first battle, though favourable to the Musulmans, was not a decisive victory for their arms ; Rudra Deo's army retired unbroken behind the strong walls of his capital.

Juna Khan instantly laid siege to Warangal, but within a very short time was faced by an epidemic of cholera which

wrought havoc among his troops. The ravages of the disease caused a panic in the Moslem army, and reports of a revolution in Delhi and the death of the Emperor completed the demoralisation. A considerable portion of the army deserted, forcing Juna Khan to abandon the siege of Warangal and retire to Delhi.

Only 3000 men survived the long and strenuous march back to the capital, but Juna Khan was not the man to give up the struggle, and within two months of his return to Delhi he had raised and equipped a fresh army, which he led against Warangal, this time with very different results.

Reconquest of Telingana.

Vidharba or Bidar was captured and garrisoned, the siege of Warangal was renewed and the city forced to capitulate. In spite of his bravery, Rudra Deo was taken prisoner and, with his family, sent to Delhi.

For some time it had been obvious that Shahab-ud-Din Bughra Khan, the grandson of the Bughra Khan who had been Governor of Bengal during the reign of the murdered Emperor Kaikubad, whose father he was, had, though nominally acting as governor, in point of fact assumed the rights of a monarch.

In 1235, Ghiyas-ud-Din Tughlak considered it advisable to visit Bengal in order to judge for himself and to settle definitely the position to be occupied by the Eastern provinces towards the empire of Delhi.

Peaceful settlement with Bengal.

Shahab-ud-Din Bughra Khan received his visitor most cordially and an agreement was reached, by which the Governor of Bengal assumed the title of King whilst acknowledging the suzerainty of the house of Tughlak.

During the absence of the Emperor on this errand, dark plots were being contrived at Delhi, with no less object than that of upsetting his rule.

Intrigues at Delhi. Death of Ghiyas-ud-Din Tughlak.

Foremost amongst the conspirators was the Shaikh Nizam-ud-Din Aulia, who, in spite of bordering on ninety years of age, still aspired to the part of king-maker, and on this occasion desired to see the monarchy vested in the person of the second son of the Emperor, Prince Fakhr-ud-Din Juna Khan.

The hatred of the crafty ecclesiastic for Ghiyas-ud-Din Tughlak was due to the Emperor's having employed some of the Shaikh's workmen in the building of the new city Tughlakabad. It was on this occasion that Nizam-ud-Din uttered the celebrated curse on the city, " It shall be deserted and the home only of the Gujar ", a curse which, strangely enough, has found fulfilment in the fact that the city was

deserted shortly afterwards and, at the present time, lies in ruins.

Rumours of unrest in the capital having reached the Emperor, he immediately left Bengal and led the troops, which had accompanied him there, straight to Delhi.

As the near approach of Ghiyas-ud-Din became known to the disciples of Nizam-ud-Din, they warned him of the danger to his person from the justifiable anger of the Emperor. In reply he quietly remarked, " Dihli dur ast, Dihli hanoz dur ast ", " Delhi is distant, Delhi is still distant " (a saying which has become one of the most famous proverbs in India), and then continued to count his beads in complete tranquillity.

There was more than the stoicism of the fanatic beneath the Shaikh's indifference to the peril threatening him, and the explanation was not far to seek. At Aghwanpur, only a few miles distant from the capital, the Emperor was greeted by Juna Khan and conducted by him to a pavilion especially erected for his reception. The customary ceremonies and entertainments concluded, the Emperor rose to leave the pavilion, his son having preceded him in gaining the exit. Before the monarch could reach it, the roof of the hall suddenly collapsed, burying Ghiyas-ud-Din Tughlak and five of his attendants under the ruins and crushing them all to death.

That the Emperor's death was the result of a conspiracy and not of an accident is practically an established fact, and both the historical records and the legends of those days point to Nizam-ud-Din Aulia as being the chief instigator of the crime.

Opinions have always differed in regard to the part played by Prince Juna Khan in the tragedy. The Moslem historian Ibyn Batuta is convinced of his complicity, while Zia-ud-Din Barni, the prince's personal friend, and likewise a writer of history, evades the whole question. Ferishta is inclined to acquit Juna Khan of any guilt, but concludes with the remark that " God alone knows the truth ". There can be no doubt that whether innocent or guilty, the prince showed no reluctance to ascend the throne of Delhi immediately after the death of his father.

The new sovereign assumed the title of Mohammed Shah Tughlak ; he was one of the most accomplished princes of his age, combining perfect knowledge of the Koran and its commentaries with a thorough understanding of Greek philosophy. He was well versed in the science of mathe-

matics and a gifted physician, not only endowing many hospitals in Delhi and throughout his dominions, but also constantly himself attending the patients. There existed in the character of this remarkable man the most extraordinary discrepancies, which can only be explained on the grounds of incipient insanity. Side by side with the finest qualities of charity and kindness, he exhibited the most unreasoning caprice and merciless cruelty. In his palace at Delhi the Emperor loved to surround himself with eminent Musulman divines and scholars, and yet we read in Ferishta, "No single week passed without his having put to death one or more of the learned and holy men who surrounded him, or some of the secretaries who attended him".[1]

Mongol raid on Delhi.

The first event of importance in the new reign was the invasion of India by a vast horde of Mongols under the leadership of a chieftain named Toormoorsheen Khan. The raiders advanced unchecked to the very walls of Delhi, plundering and devastating wherever they passed, and it was only by payment of a gigantic ransom that Mohammed Tughlak eventually succeeded in effecting their withdrawal.

Campaigns in the East.

For a brief period subsequent to this invasion, the empire of Delhi seemed to be passing through a period of prosperity and even extended its borders by the conquest of Chittagong. This prosperity, however, existed only on the surface. The large ransoms paid to the Mongols and the lack of judgement and eccentricities of the sovereign, which led him to put a continued severe strain upon the resources of his country, soon depleted its strength to a dangerous extent.

And in the North.

In 1337 the desire suddenly germinated in the Emperor's brain to venture upon the practically impossible feat of the conquest of that portion of the Himalayan range situated between India and China, and to this purpose he despatched an army of 100,000 horsemen under the command of his nephew Khusru Malik. The entire force, with the exception of a few survivors who succeeded in reaching Delhi, perished amidst the snow and ice of the Himalayan passes. Those few survivors were executed by order of Mohammed Tughlak for having failed to accomplish their hopeless task.

Another of the Emperor's schemes, for the furtherance of which he had organised an expeditionary force, was the subjugation of Persia, but apparently in this case reason prevailed and the plan was abandoned. The troops,

[1] Briggs' *Ferishta*, vol. i. p. 412.

however, who were dispersed without receiving any payment, took their revenge by forming themselves into a band of plunderers and preying upon the peaceful inhabitants of Delhi.

Change of capital to Daulatabad.

In 1339, Mohammed Tughlak, suddenly conceiving a violent liking for the climate of the Deccan, issued a decree robbing Delhi of its position as capital of the empire and creating Devagiri the principal city, under the new name of Daulatabad, at the same time commanding the entire population of Delhi to follow him.

To render the transit possible and to protect the travellers from the heat, a great trunk road was constructed and full-grown trees were transplanted to give the necessary shade, but in spite of these precautions thousands of the unfortunate inhabitants of Delhi perished in the course of the long and strenuous march towards the former capital of the Yadavas.

From this time onwards the power of Mohammed Tughlak began steadily to decline, he himself being to a great extent personally responsible for the disasters which followed in close succession.

The results in two cases, though directly traceable to this monarch's misrule, did not become apparent until long after his death and had a vital influence on the future course of India's history.

Events in the South. Rise of Vijayanagar.

It is necessary here to describe the conditions prevailing in Mysore and the Hindu kingdoms of the Far South at, or rather shortly before, the period with which we have been dealing.

In spite of their subjugation by Ala-ud-Din Khilji, the spirit of their people had never been broken and the Tamils of the Carnatic, the Malayalis of Malabar, the Kanarese of Mysore and the Telegus of Warangal alike bided their time only until leaders should arise in their midst to help them to throw off the hated yoke of the Musulman.

These leaders were found in the persons of two brothers named Bukka and Harihara, formerly feudatory chieftains of the Hoysala kingdom. The brothers established a settlement near Kishkinda, on the right bank of the river Tungabhadra, famous in Hindu legend as the capital of Sugriva, the Monkey King, Rama's ally.

Bukka constituted himself ruler over this settlement, which promptly became a place of refuge to all those Hindus of the South who were determined no longer to bow the knee to the Mlechha.

Moslem revolt in the Deccan. Bahmani kingdom founded.

Gradually the refugees increased in numbers until they founded an army of considerable size. The original primitive mud huts gave way to fine houses built of stone, and thus there came into existence the great city of Vijayanagar (City of Victory), a name full of significance for the future as the capital of a kingdom which, a few generations later, was to dominate the entire South. Almost simultaneously with the growth of Vijayanagar, a new power arose in the Deccan which owed its origin to a simple deed performed by a Musulman of humble birth named Zafar, who was employed in the service of a Brahmin zemindar (landowner), Gangu, who dwelt in the district of Delhi.

In ploughing his master's fields, Zafar one day came upon a pot which, upon nearer inspection, he discovered to be filled with gold coins. Instead of appropriating the valuable find, he instantly carried it to the Brahmin, who, impressed by his honesty and also by his intelligence, caused him to be educated with his own sons, and eventually obtained for him a post in the imperial service.

From that moment Zafar Khan, as he was then called, rose to rapid distinction, and, at the time when the menace of coming danger commenced to threaten the empire of Mohammed Tughlak, he was the holder of a high military command in the Deccan. His great gifts soon became known to the entire population, whose resentment of the Emperor's misgovernment and the ruinous taxation imposed on the peasantry, the very backbone of the country, was growing apace and bringing disorder and chaos in its train. The culminating point was reached when a considerable portion of the imperial army revolted and selected Zafar Khan as their leader.

Imad-ul-Mulk, Viceroy of the Deccan, at the head of a small body of troops who had remained loyal, attempted to stem the rebellion, but was defeated in a pitched battle near Bidar; the fortress of Daulatabad was captured, and finally, on August 12, 1347, Zafar Khan was proclaimed King of the Deccan by his followers under the title of Ala-ud-Din Hasan Shah Gangu Bahmani. The last two names attached to his title were a tribute of gratitude to his former employer and benefactor, the Brahmin Gangu, and his first act after ascending the throne was to appoint his former master one of his ministers, which constitutes the earliest record in Indian history of the bestowal of high office on a Hindu by a Musulman ruler. Up to this time the empire of Delhi had been the only Mohammedan power in India. The

establishment of the Bahmani kingdom in the Deccan marks an important epoch in the history of the Musulman rule in the peninsula, and henceforth the foundation of independent Mohammedan kingdoms in different parts of the country by ambitious provincial governors, who saw their opportunity in the ever-increasing weakness of the central authority, was of frequent occurrence.

Simultaneously with the proclamation of the independence of the Deccan, a revolt led by officers of Mongol extraction broke out in the neighbouring province of Gujarat, and the rebels succeeded in capturing the capital, Anhilvara, and imprisoned the imperial Viceroy.

Mohammed Tughlak called together all the troops upon whose fidelity he could rely and, marching into Gujarat, quelled the rebellion after severe fighting.

Further revolts. Death of Mohammed Tughlak.

Not content with this favourable issue, the Emperor pursued some of the defeated rebels into the territory of the Samma Rajput Prince of Lower Sind, whose protection they had sought, and it was whilst encamped on the banks of the Indus that he was seized with a sudden attack of fever, the result of over-indulgence in eating fish, which terminated fatally on March 30, 1351.

It is needless to enter upon a review of the characteristics of this extraordinary ruler; they have been sufficiently demonstrated by the events of his reign, and he is best described in the words of Elphinstone, the eminent historian, as "One of the most accomplished princes and furious tyrants who have ever adorned or disgraced humanity".[1]

Mohammed Tughlak had left no son, but had, on his death-bed, nominated his cousin, Prince Firoz, to be his successor upon the throne; however, when the news of the Emperor's demise reached Delhi, certain of the nobles, supported by the local garrison, proclaimed an infant member of the imperial house as sovereign.

Accession of Firoz Shah Tughlak.

This was unanimously opposed by the army in Sind, who, to a man, declared in favour of Prince Firoz, and for some months the empire was threatened with the danger of civil war. But just as the peril appeared to be most imminent, Firoz at the head of his army having advanced to the gates of Delhi, the supporters of the royal infant waived his claim and, on September 14, 1351, Firoz ascended the throne under the title of Firoz Shah Tughlak.

Contrary to the cruel methods of his predecessor, the new Emperor strove above all else to ensure the prosperity

[1] Mountstuart Elphinstone's *History of India*.

and happiness of his people, which he considered of more vital importance than the extension of the boundaries of his empire ; also, whilst preserving an intense devotion to Islam, he did not, like so many of the early Mohammedan rulers of India, show any fanatical hatred of the " infidel ".

Whilst in a subordinate position, he had served his cousin with whole-hearted fidelity and devotion, and may be looked upon as one of the very few amongst those immediately surrounding him whom the gloomy, suspicious tyrant had really trusted.

The first notable event of his reign was the founding in the year 1354 by Firoz Shah of a third city of Delhi, adjoining the two previous capitals of Kutub-ud-Din and Ghiyas-ud-Din Tughlak. The Emperor gave this third city of Delhi the name of Firozabad, and further to emphasise his sense of responsibility in calling it into being he caused the following decree to be inscribed on the wall of its principal mosque, which bears striking testimony to his piety and benevolence:

" It has been usual in former times to spill Mohammedan blood on trivial occasions, and for small crimes to mutilate and torture them by cutting off the hands and feet and noses and ears, by putting out eyes, by pulverising the bones of the living criminal with mallets, by burning the body with fire, by crucifixion and by cutting human beings into pieces. God in his infinite goodness, having been pleased to confer on me the power, has also inspired me with the disposition to put an end to these practices. I have also taken pains to discover the surviving relatives of all persons who suffered from the wrath of my late Lord and Master Mohammed Tughlak and, having pensioned and provided for them, have caused them to grant their full pardon and forgiveness to that Prince, in the presence of the holy and learned men of their age, whose signatures and seals as witnesses are affixed to the documents, the whole of which, as far as lay in my power, have been procured and put into a box and deposited in the vault in which Mohammed Tughlak is entombed." [1]

Amongst the many wise and salutary reforms introduced into the empire by Firoz Shah, the inestimable boon of artificial irrigation, hitherto unknown to the Mohammedans of India, ranks as one of the highest. The Emperor, when accompanying his predecessor on his military expedition against Warangal, had been greatly impressed by the working of the wonderful system of irrigation canals

[1] Briggs' *Ferishta*, vol. i.

constructed by the Hindus of Telingana, and, almost immediately after his accession, he entrusted skilled workmen with the construction of similar canals in his own dominions, hoping thereby to bring about the fertilisation of certain tracts of land hitherto arid through lack of water.

By July 12, 1354, matters were sufficiently advanced for the Emperor to be able to open in state the first and most important of these canals, which utilised the waters of the Sutlej and Caggar rivers for irrigation ; and, within the two ensuing years, a canal on the Jumna and another on the Sutlej transformed hitherto desert spaces into productive fields, cultivated by a contented, because prosperous, peasantry.

The Emperor reduced the taxes on land and, in order to correctly inform himself of the real needs of his subjects and to redress any possible grievances, spent several months in each year touring the provinces of his empire. All his efforts were devoted to securing for his people an era of peace such as they had never enjoyed under any previous Musulman ruler, and he had no ambition to regain the sovereignty or even the suzerainty over the Deccan, where, in 1358, Mohammed Shah Bahmani had succeeded his father Ala-ud-Din Hasan on the thone, or to check the rising power of Vijayanagar, where Bukka in 1361 had taken the place of his brother Harihara.

Abdication of Firoz Shah in favour of Nasir-ud-Din Mohammed.

For the following twenty-six years Firoz Shah Tughlak's reign was an illustration of the well-known saying : "Happy is the country which has no history ". In August 1387 the Emperor, having attained the great age of eighty-nine years, and realising that his physical and mental powers were beginning to fail, decided to abdicate in favour of his son Prince Nasir-ud-Din Mohammed. This choice had, however, not been a wise one, for, from the moment of his accession, the new sovereign proved himself quite unfit to rule by reason of his dissolute conduct and his neglect of the most essential tasks of government.

Two of his cousins, securing a following, raised the flag of revolt against him, and for three days a fierce battle was fought in the streets of Delhi between the rebels and the imperial troops. At length the populace, growing weary of the bloodshed, acted upon a sudden impulse and, breaking into the palace of the venerable ex-Emperor, placed him in his palanquin and carried it into the midst of the combatants, where they set it down.

A shout of acclamation rose from the troops of both

parties and, gathering round their former sovereign, they with one voice entreated him to take up the reins of government again.

Acceding to their wishes, Firoz returned to the throne, where he continued until October 23, 1388, when he passed away at ninety years of age, leaving an honoured name in the history of his country.

Accession of Ghiyas-ud-Din II.

His successor upon the throne of Delhi was his grandson, who assumed the title and name of Ghiyas-ud-Din, the founder of the dynasty. Unfortunately he bore no moral resemblance to his great namesake and, after a reign of five months only, which formed a record of tyranny and vice, he was deposed by his cousins and put to death.

Abu Bakr Tughlak, another grandson of Firoz Shah, reigned for a few months subsequent to this event, but, on February 21, 1390, he was deposed in favour of Prince Nasir-ud-Din Mohammed, the Emperor Firoz's son, who had succeeded to the throne on the abdication of his father and who had been obliged to flee from Delhi when the old Emperor was recalled to power.

Restoration of Nasir-ud-Din.

Nasir-ud-Din Mohammed maintained himself upon the throne in spite of some rivalry and fighting, during which the capital several times changed hands, until his death in the year 1394.

Accession of Mahmud Shah Tughlak.

He was succeeded by his eldest son Prince Humayun, who died suddenly after a reign of forty-five days only, and was followed upon the throne by his younger brother Mahmud, a weak and incompetent ruler, destined to be the last of his line. His weakness was responsible for the rise of several more Mohammedan kingdoms independent of the central government. One of his first acts upon ascending the throne was to appoint as his Viceroy in Oudh his Vizier, a eunuch named Khwaja Jehan, with the title of Malik-us-Sharq, or Prince of the East, who, quick to realise his master's weakness, no sooner reached his seat of government, the city of Jaunpur, than he proclaimed the independence of Oudh and, by so doing founded the Sharqi or Eastern dynasty.

Jaunpur kingdom founded.

At this period Delhi itself was in the throes of anarchy owing to the revolt of Nasrat Khan, a grandson of Firoz Shah, who, having won the support of a considerable number of the nobles, claimed the imperial throne for himself.

Disorders in in Delhi. Invasion of Timur.

For over two years the streets of the capital were the scenes of continuous fighting between the imperial and rebel troops, who had established their headquarters in old Delhi

and Firozabad respectively. At length, in the year 1396, Ikbal Khan, who had succeeded Khwaja Jehan as the Emperor's Vizier, gained a victory for Mahmud, and nominally re-established him upon the throne, but in point of fact the Emperor was a mere puppet in the hands of his ambitious minister, who had actually vested the real power in his own person.

The internal crisis had barely been allayed before the empire of Delhi was once more brought face to face with the far graver peril, which had so frequently threatened previous rulers—invasion by the nomad Moghuls [1] of the Central Asian steppes.

At this period they had dropped their primitive Shamanism in favour of Islam, and, as in the days of Ghenghis Khan, were united in a vast empire with its capital at Samarkand and ruled over by Tamerlane, the Lame Timur, one of the most formidable conquerors and most terrible scourges the world had ever seen.

Having previously achieved the conquest of Afghanistan, and being fully alive to the weakness of Mahmud Tughlak, he determined to wrest from him the sovereignty of India. He despatched as his advance guard an army commanded by his grandson Pir Mohammed, who succeeded in capturing Multan after a six months' siege, and on September 12, 1398, Timur himself, at the head of the main body of his army, crossed the Indus and advanced into the Punjab.

Mubarak Khan, the imperial Viceroy, after a feeble attempt at resistance, escaped with his army in boats down the river Chenab, which gave Timur, who had effected a junction with his grandson's army, the opportunity to advance unopposed to Delhi, by way of Panipat.

It was on January 15, 1399, that the Emperor Mahmud and his Vizier Ikbal Khan, calling every available soldier to their banner, marched out from the city to give battle to the invaders. The Indian army was composed of 40,000 infantry, 10,000 cavalry and a contingent of 125 war elephants; its actual strength is assumed to have been somewhat greater than that of the Moghuls, but the superiority of the invaders lay in the facts that they were the hardened veterans of many victorious campaigns and, above

[1] The word "Moghul", an Indian corruption of *Mongol*, will be used advisedly henceforth, because, with the conversion to Islam of many Mongol tribes, their race became intermingled with the Turks of Central Asia, and a distinction between them and the Mongols of the Far East becomes imperative.

all, that they were commanded by one of the greatest leaders of the age.

After a severe struggle, Timur succeeded in outflanking his enemies, who retreated from the field of battle in wildest disorder, leaving practically all their war elephants in the hands of the conquerors.

Timur proclaimed Emperor of India.

Mahmud Tughlak fled under cover of night to Malwa, where he put himself under the protection of Dilawar Khan Ghori, governor of the province. On the following day, January 16, a Friday and consequently the Mohammedan Sabbath, Timur gave orders for his own name to be inserted as Emperor of India in the Khutba, the public prayers at the Mosque of Delhi.

Massacre in Delhi.

Immediately afterwards he received the Kazi, or chief magistrate of Delhi, and the leading citizens in audience and, in return for their formal submission, guaranteed to protect the inhabitants of the city, at the same time demanding from them a formidable sum of money as war indemnity, a demand which promptly led to a terrible tragedy.

The people of Delhi, roused to fury by the severity of the levy imposed upon them, fiercely attacked the Moghul soldiers sent to collect it, and, on these calling to their comrades for assistance, a general massacre ensued, which continued for three days and spared neither man, woman nor child.

Though the responsibility for this catastrophe cannot be directly attributed to Timur, the facts that he did not exercise the very strong influence which he possessed over his troops to stay its merciless progress, and that, when it was at its height, he was giving a magnificent entertainment to his officers, go far to prove that he was in no sense opposed to it.

Timur remained only fifteen days in Delhi, during which he made no effort to establish himself as resident sovereign of Hindustan, his reason undoubtedly being his fear that the luxurious living in the city might produce a demoralising effect upon his hardy northern soldiers ; he led his victorious army back to Central Asia, leaving as his deputy in India the former Viceroy of Mahmud Tughlak at Lahore, Syed Khizr Khan, a man of great ability but devoid of all principle.

Anarchy in Delhi.

A period of disorder, which from time to time culminated in complete anarchy, now swept over Delhi, the city continually changing hands. The departure of the Moghul armies was followed by the capital being attacked and captured by Ikbal Khan, who persuaded his nominal sovereign Mahmud Tughlak to return, but the Emperor, who had in the meantime left the protection of Dilawar Khan Ghori and

sought that of Zafar Khan, Viceroy of Gujarat, was unable to wield any real power in the state and was content to live henceforth on a pension provided by his minister, and to take no further part in public affairs.

The house of Tughlak was slowly tottering to its fall, and with it, for the time being, the empire of Delhi.

Independence of Malwa. Events at Jaunpur.

In 1401 the Viceroy Dilawar Khan proclaimed his independence and founded the dynasty of the Ghori Sultans of Malwa, and simultaneously with this event, the death occurred of Sultan-us-Sharq, the eunuch King of Jaunpur, who was succeeded on the throne by his nephew and adopted son, Mubarak Shah Sharqi. This monarch reigned only for the brief period of eighteen months and was succeeded by his younger brother Ibrahim.

The Vizier Ikbal Khan, believing that these rapid changes on the throne of Jaunpur would facilitate the renewal of the imperial authority over the alienated North-western Provinces, lost no time in leading an army against the Sharqi kingdom and attempted to persuade Mahmud Shah Tughlak to accompany him.

Mahmud had, however, come to realise the tutelage under which he was living, and Ibrahim Shah Sharqi having promised him protection, he departed for Kanauj, accompanied by part of his army, and took up his residence in that city.

Ikbal Khan did not long survive this event, but was killed in battle on November 14, 1405, against the forces of Khizr Khan of Lahore and was succeeded as Vizier in Delhi by Daulat Khan Lodi, an Afghan noble of the court.

Foundation of Gujarat kingdom.

In spite of gallant efforts on the part of the new minister to restore its waning power, the empire was for the time being in process of decay, and its fall was hastened by Zafar Khan, imperial Viceroy of Gujarat, the son of a Rajput convert to Islam and a very able man, who proclaimed himself, in the year 1407, King of that province under the title of Muzaffar Shah I. He was the founder of the dynasty of the Musulman Sultans of Gujarat.

Daulat Khan Lodi was a genuinely loyal servant to the house of Tughlak and, although Mahmud Shah Tughlak at first showed great reluctance to return to Delhi, the new Vizier succeeded in persuading him to do so and to take up his residence in the capital once more. He dwelt there until his death in 1412 and, being childless, his dynasty became extinct.

After a brief interval the nobles of the court unanimously elected Daulat Khan Lodi as Emperor, but his reign came

to an end in 1414, when Delhi was attacked and captured by an army of Punjab and Multan troops, led by Syed Khizr Khan, who threw Daulat Khan into prison, where he shortly afterwards died.

Timur had died in 1404 and Khizr Khan, having conquered Delhi, did not consider himself in any way bound to respect any possible claim to the throne on the part of Shah Rukh, Timur's son.

Foundation of Syed dynasty.

Khizr Khan seized the imperial sceptre and proclaimed himself sovereign, thus founding the dynasty of the Syeds, the fourth Musulman dynasty in Delhi.

This line had four representatives, the founder, Syed Khizr Khan (1414–1421), Syed Mubarak (1421–1435), Syed Mohammed (1435–1445) and Syed Ala-ud-Din (1445–1450), but these rulers, though they were Sultans of Delhi, were never recognised as Emperors of India, and their dominions, especially during the reign of the last two, did not extend farther than a very few miles beyond the gates of the capital.

Survey of India.

We will not follow their careers in detail but will turn to the events and developments which took place in India as a whole, during the sixty-four years in which their line ruled in Delhi and also of a somewhat later period.

In Western India the two great Musulman dynasties, the Bahmanis in the Deccan and the house of Muzaffar Shah in Gujarat, ruled supreme, while the greater part of Central India paid allegiance to the Ghori Sultans of Malwa.

The territories which at the present time comprise the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh formed part of the dominions of the Sharqi Kings of Jaunpur. In Bengal the local dynasty of kings known as the Purbi, vassals of Delhi, had reigned from the year 1344 until 1386, when they were driven from power by a Hindu zemindar named Raja Kans, who usurped the throne and reigned as an independent monarch until his death in 1392.

He was succeeded by his son Jaitmal, who, very soon after his accession, became a convert to Islam, and then took the Mohammedan title of Jelal-ud-Din. His rule, a wise and a just one, came to an end in 1409.

Bengal has always been one of the richest and most fertile regions of India ; she has been ruled over by powerful dynasties ; but, whilst being the home of spiritual movement and advancement amongst her Hindu population, she has never aimed at playing an important part in the politics of the peninsula, and thus we shall only touch upon her history

on the rare occasions when she has involuntarily been drawn into the difficult situations created by the ambitions and disputes of neighbouring countries. We will now turn our attention to the kingdom founded by Zafar Khan in Gujarat.

Events in Gujarat.

Muzaffar Shah I., to give him his royal title, from the moment of his accession, desired to play a prominent part in the complicated politics, not only of Western, but also of Central India. He was a personal friend of Dilawar Shah Ghori of Malwa, and had also entered into a political alliance with him, and when his death occurred in 1405, under mysterious circumstances which seemed rather to implicate the deceased monarch's son, Muzaffar embarked upon a campaign against this prince, who had ascended the throne under the name of Sultan Hoshang Ghori, and who in due course became the most famous prince of his line.

Hoshang was defeated and taken prisoner and his fortress capital of Mandu captured, but when later Muzaffar gained the conviction that he had been wrongly suspected of complicity in the death of Dilawar Shah, he gave orders for his release and restored him to his throne.

In 1419, Muzaffar Shah died—the result of poison administered at the instigation of his grandson, who ascended the throne under the title of Ahmed Shah I. The most important step taken by this monarch was the transfer of his capital from the old Hindu city of Anhilvara Patan to the little Bhil town of Asawal on the banks of the river Sabharmati, which he renamed after himself, Ahmedabad.

For centuries past the Hindus and even more the Jains of Gujarat had devoted themselves to the development of architecture as a fine art, and their talents were now pressed into the service of their Musulman rulers, with the result that Ahmedabad gradually became what it remains up to the present day, one of the most beautiful cities in India, the buildings of which are noteworthy for their combination of the Musulman grace of design with the Hindu and Jain love of ornate decoration.

New dynasty in Malwa.

In the year 1432, Sultan Hoshang Ghori of Malwa had died and had been succeeded by his son Sultan Mohammed Ghori ; this ruler was poisoned three years later at the instigation of his Wazir, Mahmud Khan, who seized the throne and founded the second independent Musulman reigning dynasty of Malwa, that of Khilji.

Revival of Rajput power in Mewar.

This ruler, a man of great ambition and also of considerable ability, desired from the first to extend his kingdom by the conquest of the neighbouring territories of Rajputana,

but, when conceiving this plan, he had underrated the great personal power of his opponent Kumbha, the Maharana of Mewar.

A hundred years had elapsed since Padmini had sacrificed herself so heroically and, under the wise rule of the gallant Hamir and his successors, the premier state of Rajputana had fully recovered from the devastation wrought by Ala-ud-Din and his hordes.

The reign of Kumbha Rana (1419–1469) brought the Sesodia kingdom to its zenith, and the famous capital of Chitor reached a higher scale of magnificence than at any previous time.

The foresight of the Maharana as statesman and soldier was shown by the erection of no less than thirty-two fortresses for the protection of his kingdom, chief amongst these being that to which he gave his own name, Kumbhalmir, behind the mighty ramparts of which so many future rulers of Mewar were to find refuge in their hour of peril ; but there was also the other side to his nature, that of the poet and patron of arts. Influenced, most probably, by his beautiful wife, the celebrated Mira Bai, he became an ardent devotee of the god Krishna and the author of a commentary on the Gitagovinda of Jayadeva ; he raised a splendid temple at Chitor, which he dedicated to the Divine Herdsman of Mathura.

Recognising that Kumbha had revived all the ancient glories of the Sun of the Hindus, practically every other prince or chieftain in Rajputana rendered him voluntary homage as undisputed Heir of Rama and Vicegerent of Siva.

Musulman alliance against Mewar. Victory of the Rajputs.

News of the great power of the sovereign of Rajputana was not slow to reach Sultan Mahmud Khilji of Malwa, who realised that his only chance of achieving success in his dreams of conquest lay in forming an alliance with Ahmed Shah of Gujarat, and thus ensuring his assistance. This alliance was concluded in 1440 and the two Musulman sovereigns at the head of their united armies invaded the Sesodia kingdom. They were met by the Maharana at the head of an army of 100,000 horse and foot and of 400 elephants.

In the fight that ensued, the allied armies suffered complete defeat and were driven from the soil of Mewar in wildest disorder. Sultan Mahmud Khilji was taken prisoner and the entire regalia of Malwa fell into the hands of Kumbha and were carried as symbols of victory to Chitor.

In his subsequent treatment of his captive, the Maharana

gave proof of the chivalrous spitit of the Rajputs as opposed to the fanatical ruthlessness almost invariably shown by the Mohammedans towards a fallen foe.[1]

For the six months during which the Malwa King was detained in Chitor, he enjoyed the privileges of an honoured guest in place of the hardships of a prisoner ; at the end of that period, Kumbha restored him to his throne, and, instead of demanding a ransom from him, sent him back to his own kingdom loaded with valuable gifts. The royal diadem of Malwa was the only spoil of war which the Maharana retained in remembrance of the Rajput triumph

As a permanent memorial to his victory Kumbha erected the magnificent black marble Jaya Stambha or Tower of Victory, which still dominates the ancient capital of Mewar, a " ringlet on the brow of Chitor." [2]

Vijayanagar supreme in the South.

At the period with which we are dealing the monarchy of Delhi under the weak rule of Syed Mohammed was at its lowest ebb and the mighty empire conquered by Ala-ud-Din in Central and Western India had split up into independent Musulman kingdoms far exceeding his in extent, whilst in the Far South, the Hindus, having driven the hated " Toorks " from their soil, were now united as a great kingdom ruled over by the dynasty of the Rayas of Vijayanagar. Delhi and the Punjab were all that remained to the Syed King, and in the Punjab his authority was purely nominal, the real power being in the hands of a number of great Afghan and Pathan families, of which the most prominent was that of Lodi in Lahore. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that Kumbha Rana, head of the most ancient and most illustrious Hindu reigning house, should look upon himself as the predestined liberator of his country from the yoke of the Musulman, and arrogate to himself the great task of reviving the power and glorious traditions of the empire of Prithvi Raj on the throne of Rajput Delhi.

Intrigues in Delhi ; Rajput bid for empire.

To further his plans it was necessary, as a first step, to seek a temporary alliance with one of the Musulman rulers, and the recent defeat he had inflicted upon the Sultan of Malwa and his subsequent generous treatment of his prisoner pointed to Mahmud Khilji as the most suitable choice.

In 1440, simultaneously almost with the return of this monarch from captivity to Mandu, certain nobles in Delhi, growing weary of the inefficiency of the Syed dynasty,

[1] It must be understood that this statement refers only to the Mohammedan conduct in India.

[2] From the inscription carved on the tower by order of Kumbha.

determined to offer the throne to the Sultan of Malwa and hoped thereby to strenghen Musulman influence in India. Mahmud Khilji was promised their whole-hearted support if he would agree to march upon Delhi.

The news of this projected revolution promptly reached Kumbha Rana, who saw in it the wished-for opportunity for the furtherance of his plans. He lost no time in offering the assistance of all the man-power in his country in support of Mahmud Khilji, and a combined Malwa and Mewar force effected the capture of the strong fortress of Hissar in the Punjab, whilst the main Malwa army, led by Mahmud Khilji in person, advanced upon Delhi. Syed Mohammed, panic-stricken, was only prevented from abandoning his capital and taking refuge in the Punjab by the earnest appeals of Bahlol Lodi, Governor of Lahore, who swore to defend both him and Delhi.

True to his word, Bahlol Lodi, placing himself at the head of all the loyalists whom he could muster, prepared to meet Mahmud Khilji as he approached the walls of the capital.

At this juncture there took place one of those dramatic episodes typical of the East, which brought about the sudden abandonment by Mahmud Khilji of all his plans and his rapid withdrawal to his own dominions.

The Malwa sovereign, whilst sleeping in his tent close to the walls of Delhi on the eve of the proposed attack, dreamt that a revolution had broken out in his capital of Mandu, and that his throne had been seized by an unknown usurper. This dream had left such a vivid impression upon Mahmud Khilji that when, on the following morning, he received an offer of peace from Syed Mohammed, no doubt inspired by Bahlol Lodi, he accepted it without hesitation and, heading his entire army, marched back to Mandu.

By a strange coincidence he found that on the night of his dreams an insurrection had actually broken out in the city, which had only with difficulty been suppressed. Thus, owing to the defection of his Musulman ally, the ambitious schemes of the Maharana Kumbha were never put into execution.

Syed Mohammed's death in 1445 was followed by the succession to the throne of his son Ala-ud-Din. The new sovereign's first act was to summon Bahlol Lodi to Delhi and to appoint this loyal servant of the deceased monarch Wazir of the kingdom, from the very commencement placing all power in his hands ; five years later he formally abdicated in his favour.

Foundation of the Lodi dynasty of Delhi.

This brought the Syed dynasty to an end, and the accession of Bahlol marks the commencement of the second Pathan dynasty, that of Lodi, on the throne of Delhi, a line which differed in many essentials of government from previous Musulman reigning families. The Lodi family, or rather clan, in common with all genuine Pathans, were imbued with a democratic spirit and Bahlol, even when raised to the dignity of sovereign, looked upon himself, and was regarded by his people, primarily as chief of the clan and head of a community of equals, a condition which gave added strength where the personality of a ruler was a strong one, but produced a weakening effect when vested in a monarch of a less resolute nature.

Bahlol was an admirable example of the advantages of such a system ; simple in his habits, frank in his dealings with his often difficult kinsmen and always accessible to any one seeking an audience with him, he commanded respect and affection from all classes. His reign brought with it an era of peace for his dominions, which lasted from 1457 until 1473, when he was called upon to defend them against a formidable enemy, the ruling Sharqi King of Jaunpur, Hussein Shah. This monarch, having subjugated the Tuar Raja of Gwalior and penetrated as far as Orissa, now aspired to the throne of Delhi.

Bahlol Lodi attempted to ward off the threatened attack by suggesting an honourable treaty of friendship to Hussein Shah, but the Sharqi king, interpreting this offer as a proof of weakness and of the knowledge that he felt unequal to the onslaught, rejected it and invaded the Delhi territories at the head of an army of 140,000 men.

Bahlol Lodi, with an army of 18,000 cavalry only, encamped on the banks of the Jumna and prepared to meet the enemy attack from the opposite side of the river.

For some days no move was made by either of the contending forces, when Hussein Shah, lulled into a false sense of security by the quiet reigning in his opponent's camp, gave orders for the whole of his cavalry to start upon a foraging expedition. Bahlol Lodi was quick to realise his opportunity, and at the head of his horsemen forded the river and attacked the Sharqi infantry. Totally unprepared for this charge, the Jaunpur army was seized with panic and fled towards their own country, leaving their entire camp and the ladies of their sovereign's harem in the hands of the enemy. Bahlol received the captured princesses in the most deferential manner, and immediately caused them

to be conducted back to their own capital under a flag of truce.

This chivalrous action on the part of the Delhi monarch did not prevent Hussein Shah, in the year 1474, from repeating his advance upon Delhi, this time at the instigation of his principal wife, Malika Jehan.

Fall of the Jaunpur kingdom.

Bahlol once more attempted to enter into a friendly agreement by sending an envoy to suggest terms of peace to the King of Jaunpur, receiving the boastful reply that the only terms which would satisfy the king would be the possession of the throne of Delhi. Bahlol, his patience exhausted, lost no time further in proceeding to the attack, and in three pitched battles utterly defeated the Sharqi forces. The last of these battles developed into a complete rout, and Hussein Shah, whose horse was killed under him, fled to Orissa, where he sought the protection of the Hindu Raja of that country. His kingdom was annexed by Bahlol Lodi and incorporated into the empire of Delhi.

In the general survey of events in India, the very marked changes which were taking place in the Deccan at this period cannot be overlooked and, in order to understand their importance, we must go back to February 1451.

Rise of Adil Khan. Vast changes in the Deccan.

On the 2nd of that month, Murad II., Sultan of Turkey, had died in his palace at Brusa and was succeeded on the throne by his son Mohammed II., the future conqueror of Constantinople. In accordance with the merciless Turkish custom, the new ruler determined to put all his brothers and any other possible claimants to the throne to death, but one of the wives of the deceased sovereign devised a stratagem by which she hoped to save her infant son, Yusuf Khan, from this terrible fate.

She sent for a Persian slave-merchant, Khwaja Imad-ud-Din by name, whom she knew to be trustworthy, and bought from him a Circassian boy of the same age as her son, whom she disguised in the clothes of her own child and who, being taken for the young prince, was in due course strangled by Mohammed's executioners.

Yusuf Khan was sold as a slave to the Persian merchant from whom the Circassian boy had been bought and was carried by him with his other human wares into Persia and safety.

Upon arrival at his native city of Sava, the merchant took the young prince to his own home and brought him up with his own children in the Shiah faith, the branch of Islam dominant in Persia.

Yusuf Khan had managed to communicate with his mother, and at the age of sixteen he, with her knowledge, left Persia and went to Hindustan, where he landed in the year 1461. He then formed a friendship with a merchant named Khwaja Mahmud Guristani, who persuaded him to accompany him to Bidar in the Deccan, the capital of the Bahmani king, Nizam Shah. Here he was sold as a Georgian slave to Khwaja Mahmud Gawan, Wazir of the kingdom, who enrolled him a private soldier in the royal bodyguard.

The natural ability and attractive personality of the young slave soon secured for him a position to which his birth and antecedents entitled him ; moreover Musulmans of foreign extraction were always welcome at the court of the Bahmani kings, who did not wish to see all important posts distributed amongst the native-born Mohammedans.

Mahmud Gawan had himself been a political refugee from Persia and now led the foreign party in the state, while Nizam-ul-Mulk Bheiry, the son of a Brahmin of Vijayanagar and a convert to Islam, was the head of the native Deccanis.

The friendship and patronage of the Wazir assured a rapid rise to position for Yusuf Khan, who in a few years became Master of the Horse, was ennobled under the title of Adil Khan, and finally adopted by Mahmud Gawan with the grant of large estates in the Province of Bijapur.

The remarkable rise to prominence of Adil Khan synchronised with the time of greatest prosperity in the Bahmani kingdom. The dominions of the reigning monarch, Mohammed II., who had succeeded his brother Nizam Shah in 1463, extended from Berar in the north to the banks of the river Krishna in the south, and his authority was firmly established over the whole of this vast territory, a fact which he owed almost entirely to Khwaja Mahmud Gawan, the great statesman who had always served his house with unalterable loyalty and devotion.

At every strategic point of the kingdom the Wazir had caused fortresses to be erected, which protected its frontiers, and, in spite of the big expenditure which this involved, the treasury was always full to overflowing, thanks to his scrupulous honesty and financial genius.

Drawing an immense revenue from his estates, it was Mahmud Gawan's unfailing custom to visit the poorest parts of the city of Bidar on certain days, each time in a different disguise, and to distribute huge sums in charity, always in the name of his sovereign, never in his own, retaining for his

personal use but a very small proportion of the wealth which was his by right.

The exceptional position which Mahmud Gawan occupied at the court brought upon him the jealousy and hatred of the Deccani party, who desired his overthrow and death and the substitution of their own leader, Nizam-ul-Mulk, in his place.

Cunningly-devised rumours throwing doubts upon Mahmud Gawan's loyalty reached the King's ears, and were renewed with much insistence, until the conspirators, deeming the time ripe, proceeded to put their plot into execution. They selected a moment when the Wazir was in attendance upon the monarch to drug Mahmud's confidential slave and to abstract the minister's seal of office.

This they affixed to a letter, composed by them, but purporting to be from Mahmud Gawan to the Hindu ruler of Orissa, in which the minister suggested that the Raja should invade the Deccan, that he should join him with all the forces at his command, and that they should then depose Mohammed Shah and divide his dominions between them.

Having assured themselves that the Bahmani king, who was known to indulge very freely in wine, had on this particular occasion been drinking to excess, the conspirators laid the document before him, and Mohammed, infuriated by its contents, sent a peremptory order summoning the minister to his presence.

When the message reached Mahmud Gawan, his friends, suspecting treachery, implored him to ignore it and to fly to Bijapur and there seek protection from Yusuf Adil Khan. To these appeals he unhesitatingly replied,[1] " Such conduct would be open rebellion ", and then, without further words, proceeded to obey his master's summons. He was confronted with the incriminating letter, which he instantly denounced as a forgery, but in reply to this Mohammed Shah pointed to the seal, and rising to his feet, commanded his Abyssinian slave Jauhar to behead the minister on the spot.

" As the King passed out on his way to the harem, leaving his faithful servant to meet his undeserved fate, Mohammed Gawan exclaimed, ' The death of an old man is indeed of little moment, but to your Majesty it will be the loss of your character and the ruin of an empire '." [1] Then, repeating the words of the Mohammedan creed, " There is but one God and Mohammed is His Prophet ", the aged minister put his head upon the block, and, with one blow, it was severed from his body.

[1] Briggs' *Ferishta*.

Mahmud Gawan's last words were prophetic and, with his death, the glory of the Bahmani kingdom began to wane.

Mohammed Shah, when recovered from his bout of drinking, was quick to realise the terrible mistake he had made, and was stricken with remorse and grief, which he sought to drown by a life of continuous indulgence and debauchery. He died on March 24, 1482, less than a year after the execution of his minister, and in his dying agony cried out that Mahmud Gawan was tearing him to pieces.

He was succeeded by his infant son Mahmud II., for whom Nizam-ul-Mulk, the prime mover in the death of the late minister, acted as Regent and Wazir. His elevation to the supreme office of state so infuriated the foreign party, who had remained true to Mahmud Gawan, against the Deccanis, that they determined to invite his adopted son Yusuf Adil Khan to be their leader.

Decline of Bahmani power.

The first actual step towards the disruption of the empire was taken in 1484, when Imad-ul-Mulk, Viceroy of Berar, one of the most devoted adherents of Mahmud Gawan, proclaimed his independence and founded the Imad Shahi dynasty of Berar, and five years later Yusuf Adil Khan, having assured himself of the loyalty of practically all the Arab, Abyssinian and Persian military chieftains, was proclaimed King of Bijapur under the title of Abul Muzaffar Yusuf Adil Shah.

Foundation of the Berar, Bijapur and Ahmednagar kingdoms.

He was the founder of one of the most famous Musulman reigning houses of India, the Adil Shahi dynasty of Bijapur.

Two years afterwards Mahmud Shah Bahmani, who had attained his majority, suspecting his minister Nizam-ul-Mulk of treachery and the desire to found an independent kingdom, gave orders for his execution, whereupon Nizam's son Malik Ahmed, who was living on his father's estate, declared himself independent and founded the Nizam Shahi dynasty of Ahmednagar.

Mahmud Shah raised to the vacant office of Wazir a former Turkish slave named Kasim Barid, a man of great military talent and of even greater cunning, who had been an officer during the reign of Mohammed Shah II., and had been successful in quelling a local rebellion led by a Mahratta chief, whom he had slain.

As a reward for this service, the late Shah had made over to him all the estates of the rebel leader and also had bestowed upon Kasim Barid's son, Amir Barid, the hand of the Mahratta chief's daughter in marriage.

Amir Barid, on the advice of his father, lived almost

entirely amongst his Mahratta tenants and won their allegiance by his kindness and the toleration he showed for their religion. Kasim Barid's first act upon succeeding to the Wazirat was to bring four hundred of these Mahrattas to Bidar and appoint them guards over the palace of his sovereign ; he also saw to it that all the principal fortresses of the country still under the sovereignty of the Bahmani monarch were manned by armed adherents of his own, thus reducing the power of Mahmud II. to a mere cipher and being himself king in all but name.

Events in Delhi. Death of Bahlol Lodi.

The Emperor of Delhi, Bahlol Lodi, died in the year 1490, and the nobles of the court, setting aside the deceased sovereign's elder son as well as his grandson, whom Bahlol Lodi had nominated as his heir, elected to the throne the Emperor's second son Nizam Khan under the title of Sikandar Shah Lodi.

Immediately on his accession the new Emperor transferred the seat of government to Agra in the district of Biana, hitherto a comparatively unimportant provincial town.

Sikandar Lodi was, according to his own views, an upright and just ruler, but his benevolence was entirely reserved for his Mohammedan subjects, the Hindus receiving at his hands the customary bigoted treatment illustrated by the prohibition of their religious ceremonies and the destruction, whenever possible, of their temples.

There is one occurrence in his reign which may be briefly mentioned here because it furnishes an example of the unfair treatment meted out to their Hindu subjects by the Musulman emperors of those days and also the great contrast between the mentality of the Afghan and the Rajput.

Amongst the Rajput chieftains who had been compelled to pay tribute to the house of Lodi was Dewa Hara of Bumaoda, head of the Hara branch of the Chauhan clan. His kingdom Haravati had always been celebrated for its breed of horses, and Rao Dewa possessed a steed noted throughout Northern India for its fleetness of foot.

Sikandar Lodi determined that this horse should be his at all costs and sent orders to Dewa Hara to yield it up to him. A few hours later, as the Emperor was seated on his balcony enjoying the cool evening breezes from the Jumna, Rao Dewa, fully armed and equipped for a journey, and seated upon the coveted steed, rode into the courtyard below.

Mockingly saluting his suzerain, he called out to him, " Farewell, King ; there are three things your Majesty must

never ask of a Rajput: his horse, his mistress and his sword".[1] With these words upon his lips he turned his horse's head and, at a furious pace, rode back to Bumaoda and the protection of his clansmen.

The rule of Sikandar Lodi was devoted chiefly to civil administration, for which he showed great aptitude, and can be considered on the whole to have been a peaceful one, although he was, from time to time, obliged to undertake small punitive expeditions against rebellious Hindu Rajas in Bundelkhand and Malwa.

Changes at Gujarat.

At this time Sultan Mahmud Bigara, the greatest of the Musulman Sultans, was occupying the throne of Gujarat in Western India. He reigned from 1457 to 1511, and had firmly established his rule in Kutch and the peninsula of Surashtra or Kathiawar, where he had compelled Ra Mandlik, the last scion of the ancient Jadu line of Ra Khengar, to accept Islam and adopt the Moslem title of Khan Jehan.

Coming of Vasco da Gama.

It was in the year 1498, and therefore still during the reign of Mahmud Bigara, that the event took place which became of such far-reaching importance both to Southern and Western India—the arrival at Calicut, on the Malabar coast, of three small Portuguese ships, under the command of the great explorer Vasco da Gama.

At first the Samuri, the Hindu ruler of Calicut and a vassal of the royal house of Vijayanagar, received da Gama in a friendly manner, but later disputes arose, with the result that the Hindu prince gave orders that seven Portuguese should be seized and imprisoned.

Vasco da Gama, unable to secure the release of his countrymen, retaliated by kidnapping twenty Hindu fishermen, whom he carried off as prisoners to Lisbon.

On September 17, 1500, he returned to Calicut, this time at the head of a fleet of thirteen ships carrying 1200 men, in which were included a number of Franciscan friars and other Roman Catholic clergy, whose mission it was to spread Christianity amongst the Hindus of Malabar.

The King of Portugal, Dom Manuel, when equipping the explorer for the voyage and giving him the command of the squadron, had issued his parting instructions, in which the following significant passage was contained: "To begin by preaching and, if that failed, to proceed to the decision of the sword".[2]

The Samuri, alarmed by the greatly increased strength of

[1] Tod's *Rajasthan*.
[2] *Asia Portugueza*, Faria-y-Souza.

the intruders, thought it expedient to agree to a mutual exchange of prisoners, and da Gama, having satisfactorily settled this question, left Calicut shortly afterwards and set sail for the little state of Cochin, ruled over by a Hindu prince of one of the most ancient reigning houses of Southern India, who, like the Samuri, was a vassal of the all-powerful Raya of Vijayanagar.

The Portuguese admiral concluded an alliance with the Cochin ruler and with his neighbour the Raja of Cranganur, and also established friendly relations with the colonies of Jacobite Christians who had for many centuries been settled on the coast of Malabar.

Shortly afterwards the Portuguese obtained permission from the Hindu Raja of Travancore to build a factory at Quilon.

In the year 1503, Dom Affonso d'Albuquerque, the real founder of the Portuguese power in India, arrived at Cochin just at the moment when the settlement there was being violently attacked both by land and by sea by the Samuri of Calicut.

A severe naval battle ensued, in which the Portuguese won a decisive victory, their capture of eight enemy war-ships securing for them, for the time being, the supremacy over the surrounding waters.

This victory had important consequences upon the trade of Western India. The Malabar coast had always been a great centre of commerce, its ports were open to galleys from Egypt and dhows from Arabia, which exchanged the goods of their respective countries for the pearls, beryls and pepper of Southern India.

In addition to this, Malabar did a brisk trade with the wealthy Musulman merchants of the great port of Cambay, the commercial capital of Mahmud Bigara of Gujarat.

Affonso d'Albuquerque regarded his sovereign as "Lord of the Indian Seas", a dignity which Vasco da Gama had proclaimed, and, strengthened by this proclamation, Albuquerque determined to grasp for the Portuguese the monopoly of the sea-borne trade of Southern India.

To this purpose every Mohammedan merchant vessel plying in these waters was seized and confiscated with its cargo by order of Albuquerque, whose original squadron of nine ships had been reinforced in 1507 by another and more formidable one under the command of Dom Francisco d'Almeida, who had taken the title of Viceroy of Portuguese India.

War between Portugal and Gujarat.

Mahmud Bigara of Gujarat was not the man to accept and submit to such infringement of his rights ; he promptly concluded an alliance with the Mameluke Sultan of Egypt and also entered into negotiations with the republic of Venice, which had always been the commercial rival of the Portuguese.

Under the superintendence of Venetian craftsmen, who made use of materials supplied by Venice, a fleet of war galleys was constructed at Cambay, and, when completed in the course of that same year (1507), was placed under the command of the Gujarati admiral Malik Ayaz Sultani, who was almost immediately joined by the Egyptian admiral Amir Hussein, at the head of a squadron of twelve vessels.

Battle of Chaul.

These combined fleets met the Portuguese war-vessels under the command of the Viceroy's son, Dom Lourenço d'Almeida off Chaul on the coast of Gujarat.

The naval battle which ensued resulted in a severe defeat for the Portuguese, whose flagship went down with all hands, the admiral perishing with his ship. The remainder of their fleet was so badly disabled that it was obliged to withdraw.

This victory did not, however, permanently remove the danger which threatened Musulman superiority in Indian waters.

Portuguese raid Bijapur Konkan. Capture of Goa.

In the year 1510 Albuquerque, reinforced by ships and soldiers from his native land, attacked and captured by storm the port of Goa in the Konkan, which formed part of the dominions of Ismail Adil Shah of Bijapur. Goa was at that time quite a small place, but it possessed a very fine harbour, long coveted by Albuquerque, who now declared the town to be the capital of the Portuguese dominions in India, and shortly afterwards received from the King of Portugal his patent of appointment as Governor of Portuguese India in succession to Almeida.

Following upon the Portuguese annexation of the port, thousands of the Hindu population were converted to Catholicism and when, some ten years later, the Jesuit missionary, afterwards canonised as St. Francis Xavier, appeared in their midst, his influence and nobility of character brought a great number of fresh converts to the Church.

The baptised Hindus of those days, who all received Portuguese names, are the ancestors of the Goanese Christians of the present time, who are to be met with in all parts of India.

Portuguese friendship with Vijayanagar.

The establishment of Portuguese rule in Goa was immediately followed by the arrival of an ambassador from Krishna Deva, Raya of Vijayanagar, Lord Paramount of Southern India, bearing letters from his master, in which he congratulated Albuquerque on his victory, granted him land at Bhatkal on the northern Malabar coast for the purpose of erecting a factory, and offered to support the new rulers of Goa against any attempt by Adil Shah to regain the port.

The Hindu sovereign's reasons for according such a friendly welcome to a new non-Moslem element in Western and Southern India were not far to seek; fully realising that his mighty empire owed its very origin to a national uprising of the Hindus of the South against their Musulman oppressors, he saw in the Portuguese most useful and important allies against any attack by the Mohammedan kingdoms of the Deccan. From this time onwards the greater part of the western trade of the Empire of Krishna Deva passed through Goa; Portuguese of all classes were honoured guests in the capital, and Portuguese officers and men served in the armies of the Raya.

Changes in the North and West.

The years 1511–1517 saw the deaths of Mahmud Bigara of Gujarat after a glorious reign of fifty-five years; of Albuquerque, who had been superseded in the governorship of Goa, a fact which is supposed to have broken his heart; and of Sikandar Lodi, Emperor of Northern India.

Mahmud Bigara was succeeded by his son Muzaffar Shah II.; and at Agra, Ibrahim, Sikandar Lodi's eldest son, followed him upon the throne. Ibrahim Lodi, though honourable and brave, was of a suspicious and arrogant nature, and instead of following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather, who had always shown a friendly intimacy towards the Afghan nobles of their court, adopted an attitude of pride and aloofness towards them, which was bound to lead to disaster in an empire where most of the leading nobles were members of the ruling clan.

A rebellion by his younger brother Jelal Khan failed, and Ibrahim punished it by imprisoning all his remaining brothers within the fort of Hansi. The Emperor believed himself to be surrounded by traitors, and every chieftain at the imperial court felt that at any moment the sovereign's suspicion might fall upon him and result in the penalty of death.

The palace of Agra was haunted by distrust on the one side and fear on the other, and the rebellions which followed

were the natural outcome of the tension caused by this condition of things.

The first to revolt was Bihar Khan Lohani, Governor of Bihar, who, without encountering serious resistance, proclaimed himself king over the ancient land of Magadha.[1]

Ibrahim's suspicions now centred upon the most powerful of all his vassals, Daulat Khan Lodi, Viceroy of the Punjab, and in the year 1524 he summoned him to Delhi, which gave the signal for the storm which had long been threatening.

Daulat Khan, in reply to the summons, sent his eldest son Dilawar Khan to Delhi with an evasive message and simultaneously despatched a second envoy to Zahir-ud-Din Mohammed Babur, King of Kabul and fifth in descent from Timur the Lame, proposing to him that he should invade Hindustan, in which event he promised to raise him to the throne of Delhi.

We have now reached the conclusion of the first period of Musulman rule in India and are entering upon its final and most glorious era, that of the dynasty of the Great Moghuls.

[1] This chief assumed the title of Mohammed Shah Lohani.

PART III

CHAPTER I

BABUR AND HUMAYUN, A.D. 1524–1542

After the death in 1494 of his father Umar Shaikh Mirza, Babur had succeeded to the throne of the petty state of Farghana, on the Upper Oxus, one of the numerous small kingdoms into which the great empire of Timur had split up. When Daulat Khan Lodi's appeal to him to invade India reached him, Babur had attained the age of forty-two and his career from early boyhood had been one of peril and adventure.

In 1497, when only fifteen years of age, he attacked Samarkand, the famous capital, and captured it after a seven months' siege, only to lose it together with his own dominion of Farghana very shortly afterwards, owing largely to the desertion of his Moghul troops.

He reconquered Samarkand three years later, but in 1501 suffered a crushing defeat in the battle of Sar-i-pul at the hands of the Uzbek soldier of fortune Shaibani Khan and his followers, and again lost the coveted kingdom. His army was utterly shattered and Babur's life was saved only at the terrible cost of giving Shaibani Khan the hand of his eldest and best beloved sister Khanzada Begum in marriage.

Babur now found himself devoid of all territory, having previously voluntarily ceded Farghana to his half-brother Jehangir Mirza as the price of his assistance in the conquest of Samarkand.

Accompanied by his mother, two other ladies and a very small number of devoted followers, Babur found refuge in the house of the headman of Dikhat, a village in the Auratipa district of Turkestan. The headman's mother, who had reached the great age of a hundred and eleven, dwelt under her son's roof and was able to tell Babur many incidents

related to her by her brother, who, when a youth, had served in the army of Timur during his invasion of India.

Her faculties untouched by age, she was ever ready to give to the royal exile, whom fate had brought as a guest to her son's house, glowing accounts derived from the storehouse of her memory of the wonders of Hindustan, its fertile plains, magnificent cities and boundless wealth. These descriptions produced a deep impression upon the mind of the young monarch, and he began to dream of a dominion far greater than Samarkand. These dreams soon took shape in his ambitious brain, and Babur's first step was to seek and obtain the assistance of his maternal uncles Mahmud and Ahmed, the descendants of Ghenghis, who jointly held the Khanate over the Mongolian tribes proper as distinct from the Chagatai race of mixed Turki and Mongol origin, to which Timur and the princes of his house belonged.

During the two years which followed, Babur and his allies fought the Uzbeks with fluctuating results, but in the month of June 1503 Shaibani's forces gained a decisive victory.

The two Khans, completely disheartened by this defeat, withdrew to the Mongolian steppes, leaving Babur with only three hundred devoted adherents who were prepared to share all the perils and hardships of his position.

For another year this small band of fugitives, their clothing reduced to rags and carrying clubs as their only weapons of defence, roamed the wild mountains of Farghana, their lives ever at the mercy of the fierce nomad tribes and dependent upon their goodwill for the scanty food upon which they subsisted.

The year 1504 brought a dramatic change in the fortunes of the intrepid adventurers. Shaibani, elated by the conquest of Samarkand, but his overmastering ambition still unsatisfied, now led his armies against Khusru Shah, ruler of Badakshan, and the latter, realising the impossibility of putting up a proper defence, evacuated his capital, Kunduz, and, leaving his army, which was composed chiefly of Moghul mercenaries, retired towards Kabul with the intention of placing himself under the protection of Mohammed Mokim, the ruler of that country.

Babur here saw the longed-for opportunity to retrieve his fallen fortunes and at the same time to revenge himself upon Khusru Shah, whom he hated for having gained his throne by the murder of his (Babur's) cousin Baisanghar Mirza.

He was fully aware also of the fickleness of Moghul allegiance and promptly opened negotiations with the Moghul soldiers, who very quickly abandoned the fallen ruler of Badakshan in favour of the ex-king of Farghana.

Babur's conquest of Kunduz and Kabul.

Babur's entire force consisted of 4000 men, and with this diminutive army he determined to attempt the conquest of Kabul. Arriving at the frontier he was met by an army under the leadership of Sherak Beg, one of Mohammed Mokim's chief officers, whom he defeated without much difficulty. Sherak and his troops surrendered and entered the service of the conqueror, Babur thus finding his army strengthened for the attack upon the city of Kabul.

Mohammed Mokim capitulated after the merest show of resistance, Babur according him the generous terms that he should be allowed to march out with full honours of war and retire to Kandahar with his family and few remaining adherents.

Babur made his public entry into the city, where he was enthroned in the citadel as King of Kabul, Ghazni and their dependencies, and had thus accomplished his first milestone on the road to Delhi.

In the year 1510 Shaibani fell at Merv in a battle against the forces of Shah Ismail Safavi of Persia, and Babur, with the aid of the latter monarch, reconquered Samarkand, which thus for the third time passed into his possession. He held it as the vassal of the Persian sovereign until 1513, when he was again expelled by the Uzbeks under the command of Ubaidullah Khan and forced to retreat to Kabul.

Babur made no further incursion into Central Asia; henceforth he devoted all his strength and energy to improving his position on the passes leading from Afghanistan into India.

Firearms, up to that time unknown in Central Asia, had been introduced into the Persian army by Shah Ismail, and Babur had thus had the opportunity of judging of their efficiency. He lost no time in starting artillery and musketry instruction in his own army, and for this purpose obtained the services of two Ottoman Turks from Constantinople named Ustad Ali and Mustafa.

Within a few years Babur possessed a strong force of artillery with Ustad Ali, whom he had appointed Master of Ordnance, in command, and a well-schooled body of musketeers trained and led by Mustafa.

In 1519 Babur captured by storm the strong fortress of Bajaur on the North-western Frontier of India, and within

the next three years undertook no fewer than three raids into Hindustan, in the third of which he penetrated as far as Sialkot in the Punjab.

With the capture of Kandahar in 1522 Babur found himself undisputed master of the whole of Afghanistan.

First invasion of India by Babur.

This brings us to the point when the proposals to invade India put forward by Daulat Khan Lodi, briefly mentioned at the conclusion of our last chapter, reached Babur ; the moment could not have been a more propitious one.

Babur accepted Daulat Khan's proffered allegiance with enthusiasm, and, placing himself at the head of his troops, advanced through the Khyber Pass into the Punjab. He and his soldiers crossed the Jhelum and Chenab rivers without encountering any resistance, but, when within a few miles of Lahore, news reached Babur that Daulat Khan had been driven from the Punjab by an army loyal to the Emperor Ibrahim ; and this army, under the command of Bihar Khan Lodi, a noble of the court of Delhi, now barred his further progress. Babur, convinced that in a bold stroke lay the surest way to success, attacked the forces of Bihar Khan and inflicted a crushing defeat upon them, after which he occupied Lahore without further difficulty.

Here the Moghul army rested a few days and then advanced southwards as far as the important town of Dipalpur, which they captured by storm. Here Babur was joined by Daulat Khan Lodi, his two sons, Dilawar and Ghazi Khan, and also by an uncle of the Emperor Ibrahim, Alam Khan by name, who had hopes of ascending the throne of Delhi as nominee of the King of Kabul.

Subsequent events showed the very fickle nature of Babur's Indian allies.

The early connection of the dynasties of Ghazni and Ghor with the Punjab, and the conquest of that country by his ancestor Timur, strengthened Babur in his determination to establish his historical claim to the Punjab by setting up his own seat of government at Lahore, and he conferred upon Daulat Khan the whole of the rich district of the Jalandhar Doab.

To Daulat Khan, however, who had cherished visions of founding an independent kingdom in the Punjab, this generous reward for his services seemed totally inadequate, and he was quick to evolve a plan in his mind by which he could make himself master of the capital of the Punjab. He made the suggestion that Babur should divide his army, sending the main portion to occupy Multan and retaining

only a small force to garrison Lahore, with the intention, should his advice be taken, of attacking the Moghuls while their strength was depleted, and of conquering Lahore.

Daulat Khan's son, Dilawar Khan, however, who had grown much attached to the chivalrous-natured Babur, warned the King of Kabul of the impending danger, with the result that the advance on Multan, which had been ordered, was countermanded.

Daulat Khan and his other son Ghazi Khan were arrested and imprisoned, and the Jalandhar Doab was granted to Dilawar Khan. The conspirators succeeded in escaping to the hills and there awaited further developments.

Babur had now come to realise the mistake of placing any reliance upon the Punjab Afghans, and returned to Kabul for the purpose of raising further reinforcements before making another attempt to advance into India.

One of his most trusted officers, Mir Abdul Aziz by name, supported by a considerable garrison, was left in charge of Lahore, and troops were also stationed at Sialkot and at Dipalpur, which latter city had been granted by Babur as a gift to Alam Khan Lodi.

The King of Kabul had no sooner crossed the frontier into his own territory than Daulat Khan, at the head of a strong force, captured and occupied Dipalpur. The faithful Dilawar was imprisoned by his orders, and Alam Khan was expelled and fled to Babur at Kabul.

Ibrahim Lodi now thought the moment propitious to strike a blow both at the Moghuls and at his own treacherous vassal, and to this end sent an army into the Punjab with orders in the first place to attack Daulat Khan.

The Emperor had, however, misjudged the situation, being totally unaware of the treachery which pervaded his army and of the fact that Daulat had been parleying with a great number of the officers. He found himself deserted by most of them, who went over to the enemy, and the remainder dispersed without any attempt at resistance.

Babur, on his return to Kabul, had found his foes the Uzbeks in possession of Balkh, and was, therefore, unable to return to India until this menace to his own country had been dealt with. He lost no time in concluding an alliance with Alam Khan Lodi, and promised to support his claim to the imperial sceptre of Delhi in exchange for Alam Khan's cession to him of the entire Punjab.

Babur entrusted Alam Khan with letters to his generals in India, commanding them to put all their available forces

at the disposal of the pretender to Delhi, but here again the King of Kabul had misplaced his trust, and Alam Khan, once across the Indus, repudiated the treaty so recently agreed upon and acknowledged Daulat Khan ruler of the Punjab; the latter on his side promising to assist him to gain the throne of Delhi for himself.

Second invasion of India by Babur. Battle of Panipat.

This last act of treachery resulted in Babur deciding to rely upon his own resources only. He first drove the Uzbeks from Balkh, and then returned to Kabul to prepare for what he intended to be his decisive campaign in Hindustan. On November 17, 1525, at the head of a total force of 12,000 men, and with his eldest son Prince Humayun as second in command, he set out on his final invasion of that country. On reaching the frontier, he was met by a messenger from Mir Abdul Aziz of Lahore, who brought information of the advance on that city of Daulat Khan with an army of 30,000 men.

Undaunted by this alarming news, Babur continued his progress towards the south, and was joined on the banks of the Beas by Dilawar Khan, who, in spite of the defection of his kinsmen, still remained faithful to his ally.

The King of Kabul had rightly gauged the impression which this great act of daring would produce upon the enemy forces. The soldiers of Daulat Khan, aroused to a sense of danger by the accounts of the efficiency of Babur's army and the great reputation for valour of the house of Timur, deserted from their Afghan leader in thousands, and within a few days Daulat Khan found himself abandoned by all but a very few adherents.

Although still wearing the two swords with which he had girt himself as symbols of his resolve to conquer or to die, Daulat Khan now made his submission to Babur, who with customary generosity allowed him to continue to rule over his section of the Lodi clan.

Projected alliance between Kabul and Mewar.

As a result of his success, Babur was the recipient of letters from Araish Khan and Mullah Mohammed, two of the leading figures at the court of Delhi, tendering him their allegiance. Of far greater importance, however, was the arrival of an envoy at his camp sent by the great Maharana Singram Singh of Mewar, offering him an alliance and undertaking, in the event of his acceptance, to co-operate with him by occupying Agra with his Rajputs, and thus leaving Babur free to lead the main attack upon Delhi. The ambassador returned to Chitor with the King of Kabul's acceptance of the Maharana's proposals, and bearing many

rich ceremonial gifts from Babur to his powerful new ally.

As soon as his preparations were completed Babur gave the order to move upon Delhi, and on February 26 a Moghul force commanded by Prince Humayun attacked the advance guard of the Delhi army and achieved a brilliant victory.

It was on April 12 that Babur, at the head of his small army, issued forth upon the plain of Panipat, the scene of so many struggles for supremacy in India, and there found himself faced by a force of 100,000 men commanded by the Emperor Ibrahim in person.

Taking into consideration the overwhelmingly superior numbers of the Indian army and the fact that it included 1000 or more war elephants, the action of the King of Kabul in challenging it with such a diminutive force seemed nothing short of madness, but the strength of the Moghuls lay in their artillery and musketry, as opposed to the traditional primitive methods of warfare still in usage with the Indians. The artillery of those days was naturally still in its infancy, and Babur, fully alive to the danger which might arise for his gunners from a sudden attack by the immense masses of Indian cavalry, if the guns were slow in action, caused a breastwork to be constructed, formed partly of transport waggons and partly of felled trees, strung together by ropes of raw hide.

The heavy artillery under the command of Ustad Ali and the lighter guns and musketry directed by Mustafa were placed behind this temporary fortress, and occasional gaps in the breast-work were left to make it possible for the Moghul cavalry, at the critical moment, to break out and charge the enemy.

At dawn on April 21, news was brought to Babur that Ibrahim Lodi was leading his army to the assault, and the King of Kabul immediately prepared to meet it. The main enemy attack was directed against the right wing of the Moghul army, but when almost in touch with their opponents the Afghans showed signs of wavering. Quick to value his opportunity, Babur ordered his cavalry to attack simultaneously both flanks of the Indian line, and this manœuvre threw Ibrahim's troops into complete confusion.

Whilst the Afghans were making vain attempts to extricate themselves from their hopeless position, the combined Moghul artillery and musketry opened fire, with the result that they fell in thousands, and the elephants, terrified by the guns, stampeded and added to the general tumult.

Ibrahim Lodi, fighting heroically to the end, fell together with no less than 16,000 of his bravest soldiers, and the Moghuls gained a complete victory.

Ibrahim Lodi's body was recovered shortly after the battle by one of Babur's officers, who, in accordance with the custom of the time, cut off the head and brought it to his sovereign. This grim relic, far from arousing feelings of triumphant pride in the King of Kabul, produced an impression of chivalrous regret. Gravely saluting the head of his fallen enemy, he uttered the words, "Honour to your bravery", and then gave orders that the head and body should be buried according to the full rites of the Mohammedan faith.

Babur proclaimed Emperor of India. Foundation of Moghul dynasty.

Part of the Moghul troops under the command of Prince Humayun was sent to occupy Agra, and on Friday, May 10, 1526, Babur, at the head of the principal section of his army, made his triumphant entry into Delhi.

As the hour of midday prayer drew near, Maulana Mahmud, an eminent Musulman divine in the suite of the King, proceeded to the great mosque, and mounting the *mimbar* or pulpit, recited the words of the Khutba: "O Lord; Do thou grant honour to the faith of Islam through the power and majesty of thy slave the Emperor Zahir-ud-Din Mohammed Babur".

The romantic dreams of the fugitive who had found shelter in the headman's hut at Dikhat had been realised, and Babur was now Emperor of Hindustan. He promptly appointed one of his principal officers, Wali Kizil by name, Governor of Delhi, and having left a garrison to protect the city, marched to Agra, where he found Humayun had successfully established himself.

Amongst those who had fallen at Panipat when fighting on the side of Ibrahim Lodi, was a Rajput chief named Bikramajit Tuar of Gwalior. He had left his Queen and the members of his family in Agra, and when the city was occupied by Humayun they naturally became his prisoners. The Moghul prince immediately set his illustrious captive and her family free, and assured her of his fullest protection and friendship. The widowed Queen, as a token of her deep gratitude for this chivalrous treatment, presented Prince Humayun with a gigantic diamond, which has become famous through centuries of Indian history, the world-known Koh-i-Nur.

Babur, on his arrival in Agra, took up his residence in the palace previously occupied by Ibrahim Lodi, and celebrated

his accession by distributing immense sums of money amongst the nobles of his court. His subjects in more humble walks of life were not forgotten, and he commanded that every man, woman and child in Kabul should receive one Indian rupee, so that they likewise should share in their sovereign's good fortune.

As the hot season approached, the Turki chiefs in Babur's army began to sigh for the cool refreshing breezes of Kabul. Murmurs of discontent arose against Babur's attitude in setting up his permanent court as resident sovereign, in India, which even his ancestor, Timur, had refrained from doing. They demanded that he should return to Afghanistan with his army and that a local chief should be appointed by him to rule his Indian territories, as Timur had nominated Khizr Khan to that post.

Babur summoned the malcontents to a council and addressed them in the following words, which are taken from his own Memoirs :

" I told them that Empire and conquest could not exist without the material and means of war ; that Royalty and Nobility could not exist without subjects and dependent Provinces ; that by the labour of many years, after undergoing great hardships, measuring many a toilsome journey, after exposing myself and my troops to circumstances of great danger, by the Divine favour, I had routed my formidable enemy, and achieved the conquest of numerous Provinces and Kingdoms which we at present hold. And what force compels, what hardship obliges us without visible cause, after having worn out our life in accomplishing the desired achievements, to abandon and fly from our conquests and retreat to Kabul ?

" Let any one who calls himself my friend never henceforward make such a proposal, but if there is any among you who cannot bring himself to stay, or give up his purpose of return, let him depart ! "

This straightforward, stirring appeal by the Emperor produced a deep impression upon his audience, and with the exception of a very few whose health had suffered severely from the Indian climate, the assembled chiefs all solemnly pronounced to remain with Babur in Hindustan.

The Emperor's decision to remain in India, though a wise one as the future showed, was destined at first to involve him in fresh hostilities.

Various Afghan provincial governors still remained loyal to the fallen Lodi dynasty, foremost amongst these being

Fresh Afghan revolts. War with Mewar.

Ma'aruf Farmuli and Nasir Khan Lohani, who jointly at the head of 50,000 men seized the city of Kanauj and proclaimed Bahadur Khan Lodi, a prince of the former reigning family, Emperor under the title of Mohammed Shah.

Simultaneously with this Afghan revolt, Babur found his newly established empire threatened by a graver danger in the hostility of his quondam ally, the powerful Maharana Singram Singh of Mewar. This great ruler was practically Lord Paramount of Rajputana ; his supremacy was acknowledged by the Rathor Prince of Marwar, the Kachwahas of Amber and the Haras of Bundi ; whilst his alliance with Medni Rao of Chanderi, the Rajput minister appointed by Mahmud Khilji II. and the real power behind the throne, gave Singram Singh full control over the resources of Malwa.

The Maharana had made his original offer of alliance to the Moghuls on the assumption that the King of Kabul would, if successful in defeating Ibrahim Lodi, follow the example of Timur and retire from Hindustan. With Babur and his army on the other side of the Indus, Singram Singh felt confident of establishing the Rajput power in Delhi, and thus of reviving under his own sceptre the ancient glories of Indraprastha.

It is open to doubt whether Babur ever really trusted his Rajput ally; his action in sending Prince Humayun to occupy Agra appears to imply that he wished to forestall him there, and certain it is that the Maharana no sooner realised Babur's determination to remain in Hindustan than he threw off his mask and actively commenced to prepare for war.

At the Council summoned by the Emperor to discuss the situation arising out of Singram Singh's hostile attitude and the rebellion at Kanauj, all the chiefs in turn urged Babur to march against the Afghan rebels first and to postpone meeting the Rajput army until a later date.

Babur, however, was convinced that the great Hindu monarch, endowed as he was with immense resources and certain at all times of the passionate devotion of the Rajput clansmen, constituted a far more serious peril than the Lodi Pretender of Kanauj, who could place but little reliance upon the quarrelsome Afghan chieftains by whom he was surrounded.

The Emperor gave long consideration to all the arguments put forward by the nobles and officers, but finally decided to send an expedition under the command of Prince Humayun against the rebels in Kanauj, and to remain in Agra himself so as to be able personally to organise all his

available resources for the pending struggle against Singram Singh.

Defeat of the Afghan rebels.

The sequel shows that Babur was correct in not attaching serious importance to the Afghan menace. Prince Humayun advanced along the banks of the Ganges till within twenty miles of the town of Tajman where the army of Bahadur Khan Lodi was known to have taken up its position, and there received intelligence that the Afghans had suddenly dispersed. Kanauj was entered by the Moghuls without any resistance and Humayun continued his march, capturing in the course of a short and brilliant campaign Jaunpur, Ghazipur and Kalpi.

Attempt on Babur's life.

Meanwhile at Agra the Emperor's life had narrowly escaped being cut short by a plot conceived by no less a person than Buwa Begum, widow of Sikandar Lodi and mother of Ibrahim.

When, after the defeat and death of this sovereign, the Moghul army had occupied Agra, Babur, with wonted chivalry, accorded his fullest protection to the bereaved Queen, allowing her to continue to reside in the city in a palace especially assigned to her, where she was surrounded by all the pomp and luxury of her prosperous days ; in addition, he granted her a district with revenues amounting to £70,000 as her personal estate.

This generous treatment, however, failed to touch the heart of Buwa Begum, a true daughter of her race ; she held to the blood feud as to one of its most cherished customs, and hated Babur with an unrelenting hatred. She received information that Babur had retained in his service a cook formerly in her son's employ, and unhesitatingly bribed him to mix a deadly poison in the Emperor's food. It was entirely due to the cook's nerve failing at the critical moment, and thus causing him to spill a considerable portion of the poison, that the Emperor did not swallow a sufficient quantity to bring about a fatal result.

Rajput advance. Battle of Kanua.

Babur recovered within a few hours, and almost simultaneously received news that Singram Singh at the head of his entire army had advanced to Biana and was laying siege to the fortress. The Emperor immediately recalled Humayun, and on February 11, 1527, himself took the field against the Rajputs. Babur's army at that time was a far stronger one than that with which he had defeated Ibrahim Lodi, for a number of Afghan chiefs, then amongst his enemies, had rallied to his banner. His artillery had been rendered more powerful by a park of heavy bronze guns which had been

cast in Agra under the superintendence of Ustad Ali, one of which could carry 1600 paces ; three elephants were needed to draw them.

From Agra Babur advanced to the village of Kanua, situated about ten miles from Sikri, and here his troops entrenched themselves. Almost immediately afterwards a convoy from Kabul reached the imperial camp bringing a consignment of Ghazni wines for Babur ; accompanying this caravan there was an astrologer named Mohammed Sharif.

The Emperor was at times addicted to drinking to excess, a habit acquired in his days of adversity, and his army being not yet in touch with the enemy, he sought to drown the period of suspense by remaining in his tent and giving way to this failing. Meanwhile Mohammed Sharif in the army camp was declaring to the troops, on the strength of his astrological knowledge, that the stars were unfavourable to this enterprise, thus filling their minds with prophecies of impending disaster. The Afghans, whose loyalty was never of a very reliable nature, soon showed signs of faltering, and their example was followed by some of the Moghuls, so that desertions from the army became frequent.

It was at such moments that the finest traits in the Emperor's character rose to the surface. Summoning the entire army to form up as though for a review, he mounted his charger and rode out into the camp. In full view of his soldiers he had all his costly gold and silver wine goblets broken up, and, raising himself in his saddle, addressed all ranks in the most memorable speech of his life :[1]

" Noblemen and soldiers ! Every man that comes into the world is subject to dissolution.

" When we are passed away and gone, God alone survives unchangeable.

" Whoever comes to the feast of Life, must, before it is over, drink from the cup of Death. He who arrives at the inn of Mortality must one day inevitably take his departure from that house of sorrow—the world. How much better is it to die with honour than to live with infamy !

" With fame, even if I die, I am contented. Let fame be mine since my body is Death's. The Most High God has been propitious to us and has now placed us in such a crisis that if we fall in the field, we die the death of martyrs ; if we survive we rise victorious, the avengers of the cause of God. Let us, then, with one accord, swear on God's holy word, that

[1] *Memoirs of Babur, Emperor of India,* abridged by Lt.-Col. F. G. Talbot, p. 205.

none of us will even think of turning his face from this warfare, nor desert from the battle and slaughter that ensues, till his soul is separated from his body."

The Emperor's inspired words achieved a twofold result: they revived the loyalty of the Moghuls to the house of Timur and aroused in the Afghans of the army, who interpreted Babur's words as a clear intimation that he regarded the coming struggle in the light of a *Jehad* or holy war, all their inherent fanaticism and religious zeal. The battle cry of Islam, "Din Din Allah el Akbar!", burst forth from the assembled ranks, and one and all swore on the Koran to be true to their sovereign as long as life should endure.

Babur's appeal to his soldiers was only just in time, for, on March 16, scouts brought information that the army of Singram Singh was approaching. The Emperor was aware of the magnificent courage of the Rajputs, and as their army, 200,000 strong, advanced in well-ordered contingents, each under the banner of its own prince or chief, the golden sun on a crimson field, in the centre of the troops marking the position of Singram Singh, Heir to Rama and Vicegerent of Siva—he fully realised the desperate nature of the conflict before him.

Babur knew the Rajput horsemen to be a match even for his famous Moghul cavalry and determined to rely chiefly on his artillery, which he placed in the centre, grouping his cavalry and infantry in such a manner as to leave the guns an unhampered range of fire. As the *naggaras*, the giant kettledrums of the Rajputs, sounded their signal for the third time, line upon line and clan upon clan swept forward to the charge, and simultaneously Ustad Ali caused his heavy guns to blaze forth.

The Rajputs showed no sign of wavering; their disregard of personal danger can only be compared to what we in modern days have seen in the attitude of the Japanese Samurai when their lives are imperilled.

Fighting under the command of the supreme chief of their race, their prize was the sovereignty of India, and, should they be defeated and fall in the struggle, their souls would, according to their unfailing belief, be borne by the Apsaras [1] to Paradise.

The pitiless artillery fire of the Moghuls decimated the Rajput ranks, but as one line of horsemen vanished, fresh

[1] The Apsaras—the Valkyrie of the Rajput Mythology—are beautiful maidens who carry the souls of departed heroes in celestial cars to the mansions of the sun.

ones galloped bravely through the wall of flame, and, charging into the very midst of the Moghul army, almost reached the spot where Babur, surrounded by his staff, was directing the battle.

A furious struggle ensued, but the losses of the heroic Rajputs had been too severe and it was impossible for them to maintain themselves against the Moghul cavalry which, commanded by Babur in person, now charged their depleted ranks and gained a complete victory. The battle of Kanua was won, and what remained of Singram Singh's great host broke up and retreated towards Rajputana.

Before leaving Chitor to start upon this disastrous campaign, Singram Singh had vowed before the altar of the tutelary deity of the Sesodias never to re-enter his capital unless victory had been his.

Death of Singram Singh. Babur's position secured.

It is possible that he might, had his life been spared, have renewed his attempt to wrest the imperial sceptre of Hindustan from the "Toorks", but within a few months of his defeat by Babur he died at Buswa on the frontier of Mewar, and was succeeded on the throne of Mewar by his eldest son Ratna.

With the death of Singram Singh, Babur's only dangerous rival had been removed from his path, and henceforth he merely undertook occasional punitive expeditions for the purpose of asserting his supremacy in India.

The battle of Kanua finally destroyed the Rajput chances of restoring the ancient Hindu empire; but this has not prevented the princes of Mewar from playing a great and frequently very glorious part in the history of India.

Death of Babur.

The following three years of the Emperor's life were devoted chiefly to the organisation of the great empire he had conquered. He died in the year 1530, and his death was attended by circumstances so dramatic as to make it a fitting close to his wonderful career. Babur was deeply attached to his eldest son Prince Humayun, the child of his favourite wife Mahum Begum, and the prince's brilliant campaigns in Oudh and Central India had been watched over with the greatest pride by the Emperor.

The intensity of his anxiety and grief may be imagined when, in the summer of 1530, Humayun was suddenly stricken with severe illness accompanied by raging fever, and the royal physicians were compelled to inform Babur that all hope of recovery must be abandoned. Imbued, like most Orientals, with a strong sense of superstition, the Emperor believed it possible by the performance of certain

religious ceremonies and magical incantations to draw the fever from Humayun to himself and thus to sacrifice himself for his son. A few of his devoted courtiers strove to deter him from this plan by imploring him to offer the Koh-i-Nur as a sacrifice. To these he passionately replied : " Is there any stone that can be weighed against my son ? Rather shall I pay his ransom myself ". These words were no sooner spoken than he proceeded to the chamber in which his son lay, and, solemnly reciting the prayers customary at Musulman religious sacrifices, he walked three times round the bed, and then turning to the physicians, his face irradiated by happiness, said, " I have borne it away, I have borne it away ! " [1]

There are mysteries in the spheres of what some call superstition and others faith which have at all times baffled the mind of man ; certain it is that a few hours after Babur's strange incantation, the dangerous symptoms had disappeared and Humayun lay in a peaceful slumber, which was followed in due course by his complete recovery ; and that within the space of a few weeks the Emperor himself was stricken by mortal illness.

Musulman historians tell us that, as Humayun regained his strength, his father grew proportionately weaker. The Emperor's death took place on December 26, 1530, at the early age of forty-eight. His own Memoirs supply by far the most vivid picture of the first of the Great Moghuls, though many historians have attempted to render a true account of this arresting personality. The boy of fourteen who artlessly confesses " he could not help crying a good deal " at the failure of his first attempt against Samarkand ; the adolescent who says that he dared not raise his eyes to look at Baburi, the dancing girl, whom he loves ; the high-spirited young man who, a few days after the disaster of Sar-i-pul, challenges two of the comrades who had shared in his retreat to a race on horseback—all stand before our mental vision as we read them in Babur's own book.

One incident in particular, which figures in these Memoirs, depicts with wonderful clearness the qualities which led to the Emperor's final achievements. Shortly after his accession to the throne of Kabul, returning to that city from a visit to his cousins the princes of Herat, he and his escort were snowed up in the terrible Zirdin Pass, situated in the mountains which divide the territories of Herat from those of Kabul. A few of the party took refuge in a small cave,

[1] Talbot's *Memoirs of Babur*, p. 12.

and to their entreaties that their sovereign should likewise seek protection there from the intense cold, he replied in a way which proves that Babur never asked his soldiers to undergo any hardship or privation he was not prepared to share with them.

In connection with this particular incident he writes in his diary : " I did not go into the cave because this was in my mind ; some of my men in snow and storm, I in the comfort of a warm house ! the whole horde outside in misery, I inside sleeping at ease ; that would be far from a man's act, quite another matter than comradeship. What strong men stand, I will stand ; for as the Persian proverb says, to die with friends is a nuptial ".

Accession of Humayun.

Humayun, the son for whom Babur had offered up the supreme sacrifice, followed him as Emperor of Hindustan.

The new monarch inherited many of the fine traits in his father's character. He was brave, chivalrous, honourable, and generous almost to a fault, but there was a certain indolence in his nature which resulted in his allowing an opportunity favourable to the attainment of a purpose, which he desired, to be missed, a failing which eventually involved him in severe disasters. When the late Emperor felt his death approaching, he had adjured Humayun to abstain from any action which could bring about a fratricidal quarrel between himself and his three brothers. " Do naught against your brothers, even though they may deserve it ", are the words of his last testament which figure in his diary. Humayun determined to go even beyond this solemn promise by giving to Kamran, the brother next to him in age, who already governed Kabul, the additional Governorship of the Punjab.

Rise of Sher Khan Sur.

Mirza Askari, the late Emperor's third son, was nominated Governor of Sambhal in Oudh, and the youngest, Hindal by name, was appointed to exercise authority over Mewat. Far from appreciating the new Emperor's desire to share loyally the honours which had come to him with his brothers, they, from the moment of his accession, commenced a series of intrigues to undermine his supreme authority. In addition to this undisguised hostility on the part of his brothers, Humayun, very soon after his accession, was threatened by a formidable enemy in the person of Farid Khan Sur, an Afghan adventurer who claimed descent from Shahab-ud-Din Ghori, and who had at one time been in the service of Ibrahim Lodi, who had granted him estates at Sasaram in Bihar.

During the unsettled period which followed upon the battle of Panipat, Farid had attached himself to Mohammed Shah Lohani, the Afghan chieftain who had proclaimed himself King of Bihar, and it so happened that during a big game hunt he had saved this monarch's life by killing with one blow of his sabre a tiger which had sprung from the jungle into the midst of the hunters. For this brave act the King had bestowed upon him the title of Sher Khan, by which he was ever afterwards known.

Following closely upon this incident, Sher Khan was driven from his estates by a relative with whom he was on terms of enmity, and he offered his services to Babur on condition that the Emperor should put a Moghul force at his disposal, which would enable him to regain possession of the territory of which he had been robbed.

The request was granted, and within a brief period Sher Khan had regained Sasaram, and then joined Babur, who was in camp at the time, and very soon received full recognition as one of the nobles of the Emperor's immediate circle.

At heart Sher Khan hated the Moghuls, whom he looked upon as uncouth barbarians, and, realising that they were a comparatively small force, he became convinced during the time that he spent at the camp, that their success was largely due to the incorrigible habit of the Indo-Afghan clans of quarrelling amongst themselves, and that a strong leader, who could unite the clans under his command, might yet regain the empire of Delhi for the Afghans.

He saw in himself the man of destiny, and, leaving the imperial camp quite suddenly under the pretext that his estates were again threatened, he returned to the court of Mohammed Shah Lohani, where his influence became so great that on the death of that monarch he was appointed Wazir of the kingdom by the Queen Mother Ladu Sultana, who acted as regent for her son Jelal Shah.

A few years later the Queen Regent died, and Sher Khan succeeded to the regency, and still further added to the esteem in which he was held by defeating the army of Mahmud Shah Purbi, King of Bengal, who had attempted an invasion of Bihar.

In spite of his achievements, or perhaps even because of them, the Regent had many enemies at the court of Bihar, and they succeeded in persuading the youthful Jelal Shah that he was plotting to usurp the throne, with the result that the King fled to Bengal to ask the assistance of Mahmud Shah Purbi against Sher Khan.

The Bengal monarch, whose pride was still suffering severely from his recent defeat by the Bihar army commanded by Sher Khan, was only too willing to comply with this request, but as Sher Khan could count upon the unqualified support of the Bihar army, he succeeded in entirely routing the forces of Mahmud Shah, whose artillery and elephants were captured, and the immediate result was that the Wazir became King of Bihar in all but name. By a stroke of fortune in which there was also an element of romance, his position was still further assured.

Taj Khan, governor of the great fortress of Chunar, situated on the Ganges and constituting one of the principal keys to Bihar, had died, and his widow, Ladu Malika, a woman celebrated for her beauty, had inherited the fort and his estates.

Sher Khan had for some time coveted the fortress, and his fancy having also been roused by the accounts which had reached him of the charms of its mistress, he determined to gain Chunar by winning the hand of Ladu Malika. Still fresh from his victory against Bengal, Sher Khan paid a ceremonial visit to Chunar and very soon proved successful in his suit ; with his marriage to Ladu Malika, Chunar, the chief bulwark of the ancient land of Magadha, passed into his possession. Sher Khan's activities had, up to this time, not been interpreted in a hostile sense by Humayun, but when in the year 1532 news reached the Emperor that Chunar had passed into his hands, he despatched one of his most devoted officers, Hindu Beg, to the fortress with instructions to demand its surrender in the sovereign's name. Sher Khan replied with a blunt refusal, but when shortly afterwards the Emperor appeared in person at the head of a Moghul army, he adopted a more temperate attitude and promised, if allowed to retain Chunar, to send his son at the head of a body of Afghan horse to serve in the imperial forces.

Alliance of Delhi with Mewar.

Humayun fell into the trap so craftily laid and accepted the offer and then returned to Agra, where soon afterwards a messenger reached him from Kurnavati, the young widow of Singram Singh and by birth a princess of Bundi, begging his intervention against an attempt on the part of Bahadur Shah, the reigning King of Gujarat, to invade Mewar.

The Maharana Ratna, the successor of Singram Singh, had been killed in the year 1535 in a personal fight with the Rao of Bundi, who also succumbed, and his younger brother Bikramajit now succeeded to the throne of Mewar.

Bikramajit was a brave man, but showed arrogance and

lack of intuition in the treatment of his feudatory chiefs, and instead of relying, as his predecessor had done, on their loyalty to defend his kingdom, had enlisted a large army of low-caste *paiks*, or foot soldiers, for that purpose.

At the very moment when the Maharana of Mewar was faced by this discontent in his own kingdom, Bahadur Shah, the reigning King of Gujarat, who had in 1530 overthrown Mahmud Khilji of Malwa and annexed his kingdom to Gujarat, led his army to Mewar, in the hope of effecting the conquest of the premier state of Rajputana. By the mistakes which Bikramajit had made he had forfeited the support of his chiefs, who all deserted his standard and rode back to defend Chitor, whilst the *paiks*, in whom he had placed his trust, broke and fled as soon as the opposing forces came into touch.

Queen Kurnavati had, after the death of Singram Singh, given birth to a posthumous son, and round this child Udai Singh and his mother the Rajput chiefs now rallied, so that when Bahadur Shah arrived at the gates of Chitor he found the city prepared for a siege.

The King of Gujarat was prepared for all emergencies, and brought in his train a formidable number of siege guns served by Portuguese artillery-men. The Rani Kurnavati, brave and clear-sighted like so many of the women who have played a part in Rajput history, realised to the full that her only hope of saving her country was in seeking outside aid, and in order to do this she had to make the fate of Mewar dependent upon the result of a desperate throw.

In order fully to understand how this plan took shape in the Queen's mind it is necessary to consider the status of Hindu women after the Mohammedan conquest of India, as compared with the freedom they had enjoyed up to that moment. Their personal liberty was curtailed, the Rajputni dwelt behind the purdah, the Swaimvara had ceased to exist, and thus she was no longer permitted to select her husband from amongst the suitors to her hand ; yet in spite of these changes there still lingered in Rajputana certain customs which the Mohammedan rule had not been able to tread under foot, foremost amongst these being that known as the Bond of the Bracelet, by which any Rajputni, maid, wife or widow, who found herself in peril might send her bracelet to her chosen cavalier, thus adopting him as her *Rakhi-bund-Bhai* (bracelet-bound brother), which put the obligation upon him to go to her assistance at all costs or to forfeit his honour as a Rajput.

Kurnavati realised that all the Rajput states having suffered in an equal measure on the fateful day of Kanua, there was no Rajput prince powerful enough to rescue her from her dangerous position, and though she knew that the chivalrous traditions of Rajputana were unknown to the Musulmans, she determined to send her bracelet to Humayun with an urgent appeal for his assistance.

The Queen's messenger was fortunate enough to pass unmolested through the lines of the besiegers, and found the Emperor resting at Agra, after his expedition against Chunar.

The gallant son of Babur proved equal to the occasion, and receiving the bond of brotherhood from the Rani's envoy with every manifestation of pride in her trust, bade him return to Chitor without delay and tell her that he considered himself henceforth pledged to her service, " even if the demand were the castle of Rinthambur ".[1]

Faithful to his word, Humayun led his army in person towards Mewar, but on reaching the frontier found that he had been forestalled by Bahadur Shah, and that the Portuguese engineers and gunners who formed part of his army had succeeded in laying a mine under the Bika Rock, one of the main defences of Chitor.

Amongst the victims of the terrible explosion which followed were the Rani's brother, Arjun Hara, Prince of Bundi, and 500 of his clansmen, and the breach which the impact had made in the walls enabled the Gujaratis to pour into Chitor.

The child Udai Singh was carried to a place of safety by some of those faithful servants who would never abandon the house of Bappa Rawal in its hour of danger, but the heroic Queen, who had striven so loyally to save her country from disaster, met her doom as Padmini had done in the days of Ala-ud-Din. There was no time left even to lay the customary pyre for the *Johur*, for the Musulman battle-cry was already echoing through the streets, and Kurnavati, with 13,000 Rajputnis, shut themselves in a vault filled with gunpowder, which had been set alight, and thus passed into eternity.

Humayun, though he had been too late to save his adopted sister, determined to avenge her, and Bahadur Shah's triumph was of but short duration, for the Emperor

[1] Rinthambur was a fortress originally in the possession of Mewar, but had been occupied by the troops of Babur after the battle of Kanua.

immediately marched his army against Mandu, the capital of Malwa.

The King of Gujarat, in his anxiety to retain his newly conquered territories, hastily evacuated Mewar, but his army met with a severe defeat at the hands of the Moghuls, who took Mandu by assault.

Moghul conquest of Gujarat.

In the former citadel of the Ghori Sultans, Humayun received the Maharana Bikramajit, the son of Babur's enemy, Singram Singh, and, girding him with a sword in accordance with the Moghul form of investiture, announced to him that he was free to return to Chitor, secure in the friendship of Delhi.

The heroism of Kurnavati, though she herself had perished, had not been in vain, and her action in "sending the bracelet" to Humayun had saved Mewar and had wrought vengeance upon those responsible for the holocaust of Chitor. The imperial army pursued the demoralised Gujaratis into their own country; Ahmedabad was entered in triumph, and Bahadur Shah, with the few followers still remaining to him, fled to the shelter of the Portuguese factory at Din. Gujarat was annexed to the empire of Delhi, and the Emperor appointed his brother Mirza Askari, Viceroy of the Province.

Revolt of Sher Khan Sur.

Just as Humayun was preparing to return to Agra, news reached him by messengers from Bihar that Sher Khan Sur had proclaimed his independence of the house of Timur, and had thus thrown off the mask he had worn so long. The Afghan leader, from his headquarters at Chunar, had advanced into Bengal, and speedily overthrowing the weak Mahmud Shah Purbi, had made himself master of the entire country.

Mahmud Shah sought refuge in the Moghul camp and appealed to the Emperor for assistance, and Humayun, quite as much in his own interests as in those of the deposed monarch, immediately led his army towards Eastern India.

The imperial forces were successful and captured Chunar, and occupied Gaur, the capital of Bengal; but Humayun had underrated the military genius of Sher Khan, and also had completely failed to recognise the treacherous attitude of his own brothers.

Although the Afghan leader apparently retreated as the Emperor advanced, he was in point of fact relying upon the approach of the rainy season to perfect his plans for the wholesale destruction of the Moghul army.

With the arrival of the monsoon, operations in the field

had to be interrupted, and with almost incredible negligence the Emperor failed during fully two months to strengthen his positions.

When at length the weather cleared he found that Sher Khan had crossed the Ganges and had cut off all communications between the imperial troops and Agra, and in the early hours of the morning of June 16, 1539, the rebel leader led his army to the attack.

Battle of Chaunsa.

Humayun was taken completely by surprise, and handicapped by the fact that the country was still flooded, and that the bridge of boats which, at length recognising the peril threatening him and his army, he was throwing across the Ganges was not yet completed, he sustained the most crushing defeat.

Practically the whole of the Moghul army, composed almost entirely of the Emperor Babur's picked troops, perished, some by the sword and others by drowning in the swollen river.

Humayun, in a desperate attempt to ford the Ganges on horseback, narrowly escaped death by drowning; his charger was swept by the current from under him, and the Emperor himself was only saved by the bravery of a *bhisti* [1] or water-carrier, Nizam by name, who rescued him from the torrent at the risk of his own life and carried him across the river on his inflated water-skin.

Haji Begum, one of the Emperor's wives, and her attendants, who had fallen into the hands of the enemy, were treated with every mark of respect by Sher Khan, and immediately sent back to Agra under a flag of truce.

The news of the terrible disaster which had befallen Humayun in Bengal had preceded the Emperor's arrival at Agra, and had created an atmosphere of intense discontent which provided his brothers Kamran and Hindal, who had arrived at the capital during his absence, with the opportunity of continuing with greater success than hitherto their efforts to undermine his authority.

Intrigues of the Emperor's brothers.

Meanwhile in Ahmedabad the third brother, Mirza Askari, desirous to compete with his brothers in any advantages accruing to them, abandoned his post as Viceroy and left for Agra, his withdrawal resulting almost immediately in the

[1] Humayun on his return to Agra decreed as a reward for his service that this *bhisti* should be proclaimed for a single day Emperor of Hindustan; and for one entire day the greatest nobles of the Moghul court were compelled to bow before the water-carrier, and to load him with the customary ceremonial gifts presented at a durbar.

reconquest of Gujarat by Bahadur Shah. Humayun, mindful of his father's dying injunction and faithful to his own generous instincts, overlooked the defections of his brothers, and for the moment they apparently became reconciled.

Victory of Sher Khan at Kanauj.

In April, 1540, the Emperor, accompanied by Askari and Hindal, led an army of 100,000 men towards Kanauj, where he was opposed by the forces of Sher Khan, who had now formally proclaimed himself King of Bengal and Bihar. The Moghuls succeeded in throwing a bridge of boats across the Ganges, but no sooner had Humayun's soldiers passed over it than the Afghans attacked them in full force, and they suffered an even more crushing defeat than in the previous year.

The Emperor's army was practically wiped out in a vain effort to recross the Ganges, his own horse was wounded, and Humayun, yielding to the entreaties of a faithful eunuch, mounted an elephant which his guide attempted to drive to the other side of the river. The powerful beast forded the river safely, but was unable to maintain a foothold on the steep bank of the further side, and Humayun would have been once more in imminent danger of drowning but for the presence of mind of two of his soldiers who, taking off their turbans, knotted them together and threw one end of this improvised rope to the Emperor, who clutched it and was thus pulled into safety.

Sher Khan proclaimed Emperor.

Sher Khan at the head of his army advanced to Agra, where he was proclaimed Emperor of Hindustan under the title of Sher Shah Sur.

Sur dynasty founded.

Humayun, in company with his two younger brothers, fled to the town of Bukkur in Sind, where he sought the assistance of Shah Hussein Arghun, the Mohammedan ruler of that province, against the Afghans.

Shah Hussein, however, had no cause to risk the possible loss of his own territory by opposing Sher Shah, who had meanwhile, owing to the treachery of Humayun's eldest brother Kamran, gained possession of the adjoining province of the Punjab, and refused to ally himself with the Moghuls.

In the following year, 1541, Humayun began to grow suspicious of his brother Hindal, who, without any plausible reason, had left Bukkur accompanied by all his personal adherents and proceeded to the town of Patar, situated likewise on the Indus ; he determined to follow him there and to judge for himself whether his misgivings were in any way justified. Hindal received his brother with the utmost

cordiality, and the prince's mother, who was also in temporary residence at Patar, gave a magnificent entertainment in honour of Humayun, to which she invited a number of ladies of the Moghul court, who had shared her flight from Agra. Sitting close beside her and still unveiled because of her extreme youth, was Hamida Banu, the fourteen-year-old daughter of a Persian teacher of religion, who had formerly been tutor to Hindal. As Humayun advanced to pay his respects to the Begum, his gaze fell upon the maiden, who had timidly nestled still closer to the princess. It was love at first sight, a love which endured as long as Humayun himself lived, and what was more, the fate of a great empire was decided that day by the beauty of that child's unveiled face. Humayun could brook no delay and instantly questioned Hindal whether Hamida had yet been betrothed, and upon receiving a negative answer from his brother, immediately declared his intention to make her his wife.

Marriage of Humayun to Hamida.

For some unknown reason, Hindal violently opposed this marriage, which was, on the other hand, strongly supported by his mother. Humayun had no difficulty in winning the affection of Hamida, and within a few days of their meeting they were united in wedlock. In spite of the great disparity of age, Humayun being at that time thirty-eight and his bride only fourteen, the marriage was an intensely happy one, for Hamida, in addition to her great beauty, was possessed of a singular nobility of character and of high courage, which future events subjected to a severe and bitter test. Shah Hussein Arghun of Sind, fearing to anger Sher Shah if he continued to harbour his defeated rival, expelled the unfortunate ex-sovereign from his dominions, and in the spring of 1542 Humayun, accompanied by his young wife and attended by a few hundred devoted adherents, set forth towards the Indian desert with the intention of seeking refuge with Mal Deo, Rathor Maharao of Marwar, who had previously offered to conclude an alliance with him. Humayun's frank and upright mind had failed to grasp that Mal Deo's offer of friendship had been merely a feint, and that in truth the feelings of the Rajput prince were those of hatred for all "Toorks" increased by a thirst for revenge towards the house of Timur, because of the death of his eldest son, Prince Rai Mal, who had fallen in the battle of Kanua, fighting on the side of Singram Singh.

His flight from India.

No sooner had the Moghul emperor crossed the frontier of the Rathor dominions than he received tidings that a strong body of Mal Deo's cavalry was advancing to oppose his

further progress. Too weak to be able to offer any resistance to the threatened attack, the small band continued their flight into the heart of the great desert, " the Region of Death ", harassed by attacks on their rear by the Bhati cavalry of Jaisalmir, and tortured by the burning rays of the sun and complete lack of water. Amongst the bravest was the young Empress, who, though soon to become a mother, never gave a thought to her own sufferings, but was full of solicitude for the loyal followers who had given such proof of their devotion by sharing her and her lord's adversity. Some, maddened by thirst, were subjected to the torture of constantly recurring vistas on the horizon of running streams beneath palm trees, only to find as they approached this land of promise a mirage which vanished before their eyes.

At length, in the month of August of that same year, the fugitives beheld before them the battlements of the mud fort of Amarkot, the humble citadel of Persad Rana, a petty Rajput chief of the Pramara clan, and Humayun, hope and fear alternating in his heart, sent a messenger to the gates to implore the protection and hospitality of the Hindu prince.

Humayun received at Amarkot.

To his unspeakable relief the Moghul envoy returned bringing greetings from Persad Rana and the assurance that he and his consort would be received and treated as honoured guests within the walls of Amarkot. The Pramara chief met Humayun on the threshold of the fort, and whilst he and his clansmen ministered to the needs of the Emperor and his male followers, the Rajput women drew Hamida and her attendants to the shelter and comfort of the zenana. Humayun was content to rest quietly at Amarkot for some days, but when he and his followers had somewhat recovered from the hardships they had endured, they longed for a more active existence.

Hearing that Rana Persad and his people were constantly being raided by the troops of Shah Hussein Arghun of Sind, Humayun offered to join the Rajputs in a punitive expedition against them.

Early in October the allies set forth from Amarkot at the head of a mixed force of Rajputs, Jats and Moghuls, and, towards the middle of that month, they made a short halt in a desert village near the Sind frontier, where the joyful news was brought to Humayun that Hamida, in spite of the terrible hardships she had undergone, had safely born him a son. Too poor to be in a position to distribute bounty in gold as is customary on similar occasions, Humayun requested his secretary, Jauhar, to bring him a plate of

Chinese porcelain and a pod of musk. Breaking up the pod, he handed a few seeds of musk to each chieftain with these words :[1] " This is all the present I can afford to make you on the birth of my son whose fame will, I trust, be one day expanded all over the world, as the perfume of the musk which now fills this apartment ".

These words were indeed prophetic, for the child, Abul Fath Jelal-ud-Din Mohammed Akbar, born in exile at a moment when the house of Timur seemed fallen to its lowest ebb, was destined to raise it to a height of glory beyond any previously attained, and himself to become one of the most powerful rulers the world had ever known.

[1] *Private Memoirs of the Emperor Humayun by his Slave Jauhar.* Translated by Charles Stewart.

CHAPTER II

THE GUARDIAN OF MANKIND,[1] A.D. 1542–1605

Reign of Sher Shah.

For a time we must now leave the dramatic figure of Humayun, which occupied a considerable part of the last chapter, and give our attention to Sher Shah, the man who supplanted him upon the throne of Hindustan.

With the military genius of which he had given ample proof when fighting for his goal, Sher Shah combined great administrative capacity, and his accession was followed by an era of peace and prosperity such as India had never as yet known under Musulman rule.

He inaugurated a system of roads, which extended from Bengal to the banks of the Indus, and which were planted with fruit trees on either side; and wells containing drinking water were constructed at intervals of two miles to refresh convoys of men and beasts on their long and arduous treks.

Public caravanserais were erected at different stages of the road for the comfort of travellers and maintained by the Government, and attached to each was a mosque so that the most pious Musulmans should not have to forgo their religious observances when undertaking these journeys. To ensure the safety of the wayfarer from the dangerous attacks of the dacoit and the thug a permanent police force was created, which patrolled the road.

There was one very outstanding feature in Sher Shah's reign; it saw the first appointments by a Musulman ruler of Hindus to posts in the state service. The Emperor's motives in acting thus were not dictated by any genuine sympathy for his Hindu subjects, but he realised that there

[1] The Guardian of Mankind or Jagat Guru, a name given to Akbar in his later years by his Hindu subjects.

were many gifted ones amongst them, whose brains should be brought into the service of the country, quite irrespective of their creed ; one of the first to be thus appointed was an obscure member of the Khatri (merchant) caste named Todar Mal, a native of Loharpur in Oudh, who, in the course of time, became one of the most celebrated and illustrious figures in Indian history.

The Emperor's more tolerant treatment of the Hindus did not, however, conciliate the Rajput states and clans, whose attitude towards Sher Shah remained so hostile that, in the year 1543, he saw himself compelled to take up arms against them.

The danger did not threaten from Mewar, the premier kingdom of Rajputana, which had not as yet recovered from the attack of Bahadur Shah of Gujarat, but from the Rathors of Marwar, who, under the able rule of Mal Deo, had succeeded in constituting their state one of the most powerful in Northern India.

Sher Shah led his troops into the desert of Marwar, where he was confronted by Mal Deo, who had summoned all the great vassals of his kingdom to his banner and was also assisted by his kinsman the Raja of Bikanir, the head of the junior branch of the royal house of Marwar.

Though these allied armies were not in excess of his own, the terrible nature of the country soon left no doubt in the mind of Sher Shah as to the extreme danger threatening his forces, and he determined to seek to alienate the Rathor nobles from their overlord in the hope that, by so doing, he would strengthen his position and ultimately be successful.

He wrote a letter to certain of the leading feudatories of Marwar which, by a cunning device, found its way into the hands of Mal Deo, and which he had so worded as to make it appear that a secret league existed between himself and the Rathor sovereign's nobles.

This ingenious plan seemed, at first, likely to suceed, for Mal Deo, no longer sure of the loyalty of his chiefs, countermanded the attack previously ordered upon the imperial camp.

Sher Shah had, however, not reckoned with the Rajput clan spirit, which decided several of the leading nobles of Marwar to give their lord supreme proof of their unswerving loyalty by placing themselves at the head of a force only 12,000 strong and fighting their way into the entrenched Afghan camp almost as far as the imperial tent.

The fury of their attack inflicted such heavy losses upon the enemy that Sher Shah was compelled to give the order to retreat, having, to use his own words, "nearly lost the empire of Hindustan for a handful of barley".[1]

Siege of Kalanjar.

The Emperor did not repeat his attempt upon Marwar but now decided to invade Bundelkhand, at all times one of the most disturbed regions of India, with the object of gaining possession of the fortress of Kalanjar. His summons to surrender was met with a peremptory refusal by the garrison, and Sher Shah immediately ordered a siege of the fortress.

His heavy guns, in due course, made a sufficient breach in the walls of the fort for the Emperor to deem the time ripe for determined action, and, on May 22, 1545, he gave the command for a general assault, he himself standing by the battery to direct operations. Suddenly a shell exploded which blew up the magazine and inflicted mortal injuries upon Sher Shah and several of his staff.

Death of Sher Shah.

The Emperor lingered in great agony until the evening and was almost at the point of death, when an officer entered his presence and announced the fall of Kalanjar.[2]

With the words "Thanks to Almighty God" upon his lips, Sher Shah breathed his last.

The deceased sovereign had appointed Adil Khan, the elder of his two sons, his heir, but the younger, Jelal Khan, who had taken part in the invasion of Bundelkhand, enjoyed greater popularity with the army, and three days after the death of his father he was proclaimed Emperor by the officers, and enthroned in state with the title of Salim Shah Sur, in the captured fortress of Kalanjar.

Salim Shah did not desire the imperial dignity, which he felt by right to be his brother's, and wrote to Adil Khan at Rinthambur explaining that he had only accepted the throne pending his brother's arrival in the capital and requesting Adil Khan to meet him at Agra.

On the outskirts of Agra, Salim Shah was met by Khawas Khan, Viceroy of the Punjab, one of the late monarch's most trusted officers, who conducted him to the city, and within the precincts of the imperial palace caused him to be again proclaimed Emperor midst the acclamations of the troops and populace.

Salim Shah instantly renewed his request to his brother to proceed to the capital and assert his claim to the sovereignty

[1] Tod's *Rajasthan*, vol. ii. chap. iii. p. 21.
[2] Briggs' *Ferishta*, vol. ii. p. 124.

and, shortly afterwards, Adil Khan, escorted by four of the highest nobles of the court, arrived in Agra.

Accession of Salim Shah Sur.

At a magnificent durbar which took place in the hall of public audience, Salim Shah took his brother by the hand and, before the assembled court, endeavoured to lead him to the throne, but Adil Khan, who was by nature timid and retiring and who fully realised that he could not compete with his brother in popularity, placed Salim Shah upon the imperial seat and solemnly renounced his birthright, saying that all he desired for himself was an estate in the district of Biana.

By the Emperor's orders a grant was immediately made out, conferring Biana on his brother as a fief, and Adil Khan left Agra to take up his residence there.

No sooner had Adil Khan betaken himself to Biana than doubts and suspicions, a fatal trait in the Indo-Afghan reigning families, began to take shape in the Emperor's mind, and without further hesitation, he sent a eunuch to Biana, carrying a pair of golden fetters, with instructions to bring his brother back a prisoner to Agra.

Adil Khan, receiving news of the Emperor's intentions before his emissary was able to reach Biana, fled to Lahore and sought the protection of Khawas Khan, a loyal adherent of Sher Shah in all the vicissitudes of his career, who had ever desired to guard the Sur dynasty from the peril of internal dissension, which had caused the downfall of the house of Lodi.

With this aim in view he had been instrumental in bringing about the settlement between the brothers by which Adil Khan had renounced his rights to the throne, and he now regarded Salim Shah's treachery as a slur upon his own honour, and immediately resolved not only to give shelter to Adil Khan but jointly with him to raise the flag of revolt and advance upon Agra.

Salim Shah, at the head of all the troops composing the Agra garrison, went out to meet the rebels, who sustained a crushing defeat; Adil Khan fled to Patna, after which all further trace with him was permanently lost, and his protector Khawas Khan became a wandering fugitive until the year 1550, when he was treacherously put to death by Taj Khan, Governor of Sambhal, under whose protection he was at that moment dwelling.

Salim Shah Sur died in 1553 after a reign of eight years, which, but for his act of perfidy towards his brother, may be considered as having been a wise and beneficent one. The

deceased monarch left a widow, Bibi Bai, daughter of his uncle Nizam Khan Sur, and a son, Firoz by name, who, at the moment of his father's death, was twelve years of age.

Accession of Mohammed Sur Adili.

Salim Shah had frequently attempted to warn his consort of the evil intentions entertained by her brother, Mubariz Khan, towards this child and had begged her, if she valued her son's life, to consent to the execution of her brother. The Empress, however, refused to believe in the treacherous designs of Mubariz Khan, who, three days after the death of Salim Shah, forced his way into the harem, seized the boy, heedless of the mother's frantic efforts to save him, and put him to death with his own hands. Immediately after this cruel deed, he proceeded to the Diwan-i-Am, where his adherents proclaimed him Emperor under the title of Mohammed Shah Sur Adili. The reign of this monarch brought with it a revival of all the atrocities and excesses practised by the earliest Musulman emperors of India, in fact in some cases they were almost exceeded.

Mohammed Shah was totally uneducated and could neither read nor write. Distrustful of the nobles, he conferred some of the most important offices of state upon low-born favourites, but was fortunate enough to find amongst these one man of outstanding merit in the person of a Hindu of the Vaisya caste, Hemu by name, originally a small shop-keeper in the town of Rewari, whom, however, Salim Shah had promoted to be superintendent of the markets.

Hemu, far from abusing the confidence placed in him by Mohammed Shah, remained loyal to him always, and put his talents both as a peaceful administrator and a capable soldier at the disposal of the unworthy sovereign whom he was called upon to serve. The Emperor, whilst tyrannising over the nobles and the educated classes, sought by all means in his power to ingratiate himself with the lowest elements in the population of Agra, with the result that he proved totally unable to prevent the quarrels of the Afghan nobles or the jealousy between the different members of the imperial family, which his two predecessors had so efficiently kept under control.

Civil War among the Sur Princes.

Ibrahim Khan Sur, his brother-in-law, seized both Delhi and Agra, and Mohammed Shah was forced to retreat to Chunar and temporarily to content himself with the sovereignty of Bengal and Bihar.

Ibrahim Khan assumed the imperial dignity in Agra, but was instantly faced by the outbreak of a revolt in the Punjab, headed by Ahmed Khan Sur, a nephew of Sher Shah, and

supported by the local chiefs, who proclaimed Ahmed Khan Sur Emperor, under the title of Sikandar.

The total force which marched upon Agra numbered only 12,000, whilst Ibrahim Khan had 70,000 under his command; but Sikandar Shah Sur was far superior to his opponent both in military skill and daring. Ibrahim Khan, at first, attempted to bring about a peaceful solution, but, this proving futile, he attacked his enemy with great fury only to sustain a complete and crushing defeat. He fled to Kalpi, and Sikandar Shah Sur made his triumphant entry into the capital, where he was promptly enthroned.

The non-Pathan elements of the Musulman population of India were beginning to grow weary of their inefficient and cruel Afghan rulers and had no desire to see their country made a perpetual battle-ground for the various pretenders, and this dissatisfaction brought about a great longing on the part of the Turki nobles of the court for the return of their former sovereign, the ex-Emperor Humayun. They accordingly wrote to him imploring him to return to his lawful seat upon the throne.

The moment was a propitious one, for Humayun had succeeded, after a ten years' struggle with his brothers Kamran and Askari, in regaining possession of Kabul and of all the Afghan dominions of his family, and his army, though not exceeding 15,000 men, was composed of tried soldiers one and all devoted to their master.

The fear that his return to India might induce all the contending Afghan factions to present a united front to the Moghuls at first caused Humayun to hesitate, but finally he determined to make his acceptance dependent upon the result of an ancient Oriental method of divination suggested to him by one of his courtiers.

Three messengers were sent in three different directions with orders to bring back to Kabul the names of the first person each of them would encounter upon their way. The first messenger returned to Kabul and informed the Emperor that his first meeting had been with a man named *Daulat*, or Empire; the second spoke of having encountered one named *Murad*, or Good Fortune; and the third said the first man he had accosted was a villager of the name of *Saadat*, or Object of Desire.

Humayun's doubts were set at rest by these favourable omens, and, in December 1554, he set out from Kabul.

At Peshawar his army was reinforced by contingents from Kandahar and Ghazni under the joint command of his

twelve-year-old son Prince Akbar and his most trusted friend and able general, Bairam Khan.

Return of Humayun.

The advance of the Moghul army at first met with no resistance ; Tartar Khan, the Afghan Viceroy of the Punjab, allowed Humayun's troops to enter Lahore without encountering any opposition, but no sooner had the occupation of the capital been accomplished, than Humayun received news that the Viceroy's troops had been reinforced and that Tartar Khan was advancing with the intention of reconquering the lost territory.

The attack was met by a comparatively small force of highly efficient soldiers led by Akbar and Bairam Khan, and near a village named Machiwara, on the left bank of the Sutlej and three miles distant from Ludhiana, a fierce battle was fought which resulted in a complete victory for the Moghuls.

Tartar Khan fled from the battlefield, but Sikandar Shah, who alone amongst the several claimants to the empire of Sher Shah possessed some of the qualities of his great kinsman, collected an army of 80,000 men of which he took command, and prepared to meet Humayun and his forces in the neighbourhood of Sirhind.

Although considerably reinforced by recruits drawn from the warlike races of the Punjab, the Moghuls were still outnumbered by four to one, and, acting upon the advice of Bairam Khan, Humayun ordered his army to construct an entrenched camp, from which, at intervals, small bodies of men issued with the object of so harassing their enemies as to goad them on to an attack.

During one of these skirmishes Tardi Beg, one of Humayun's most distinguished commanders, killed a brother of Sikandar Shah in single combat, and in the hope of avenging the death of his brother, to whom he was deeply attached, Sikandar, on June 22, 1555, ordered an attack upon the right wing of the Moghul army, which was under the command of Bairam Khan.

This able general successfully repulsed every attack upon his entrenchments, and whilst the fight was still in progress a violent storm arose, accompanied by torrential rain, which so blinded the Afghans that for some time they failed to notice the approach upon their rear of a detachment of Moghul cavalry, by which they were in due course completely outflanked.

Quick to seize their advantage, Akbar and Bairam Khan now led their troops from their entrenchments, and the army

of Sikandar Shah was entirely scattered and fled in wildest disorder, the defeated monarch himself seeking refuge in the Sewalik Hills.

Fall of Sur dynasty. Restoration of Humayun.

The Moghul advance guards immediately occupied Delhi, and on July 23, Humayun resumed the imperial dignity, making his public entry into the capital after an absence of thirteen years. As he rode through the streets of Delhi, his son by his side, shouts of acclamation arose from the assembled crowds, and in all hearts there was a feeling of gratitude that the Afghan yoke had been made to yield to the humane and gentle rule of the kindly monarch, who had returned to his rightful place.

Humayun, however, was not destined to reign for more than a few months ; in the following January 1556 he had been enjoying a quiet hour's reading on the terrace in front of his library, and was descending the narrow outer staircase just as the Muezzin of the Court Mosque raised the call to prayer.

Death of Humayun.

The Emperor immediately performed the customary genuflections, but when at their conclusion he rose, his foot slipped upon the marble stairs and, unable to regain his balance, he fell a distance of twenty feet to the ground. Stunned by the fall, Humayun regained consciousness after a time, but succumbed a few days later to severe internal injuries.

There is little to add to what has already been said of the characteristics of the second Moghul Emperor, excepting that, in the bitter school of his exile, he had largely overcome his only serious fault, that of indolence, and had, in place of it, shown a mingling of tenacity of purpose and high courage during the thirteen years at the end of which he regained his empire, worthy of the noblest traditions of his race.

The only barbarous act to which he had consented in the course of his reign was the blinding of his treacherous brother Kamran, and it is generally assumed that, in agreeing to this punishment, Humayun had sought to protect him from the worse fate of death at the hands of the infuriated loyalists. His burial took place in the magnificent tomb at Delhi, where, by a dramatic stroke of fate, the last sovereign of his house was to seek refuge from his foes, and which, up to the present day, is in a state of perfect preservation.

Accession of Akbar.

At the moment of the Emperor's death, the young Prince Akbar, whom he had immediately after his victory over Sikandar Shah Sur nominated heir to the throne, was at

Kalanur in the Punjab, commanding an expedition against Sikandar once more, who, at the head of what remained of his great army, was starting a series of raids into the plains. Tardi Beg, Governor of Delhi, was so anxious to avoid the intrigues, or possibly even attempts at revolution, which the new Emperor's absence from the capital at such a moment might give rise to, that he contrived to keep Humayun's death a secret from the population for seventeen days, during which time the royal insignia were sent to Akbar at Kalanur, and, as soon as they had reached him on February 15, 1556, he was formally proclaimed, both at Kalanur and at Delhi, and the Khutba was read in his name in the mosques.

In order to do full justice to Akbar and to the great achievements of his reign we shall do well to throw a brief glance over the conditions existing in India at the moment of his accession.

It was only in the imperial city of Delhi, Agra, part of Oudh and the Punjab that the authority of the house of Timur had been efficiently re-established. Various members of the fallen dynasty of Sur still continued to create disturbances in many parts of the country ; the Rajput princes were only biding their time to take advantage of the weakness and growing dissensions of the " Toork ", and by far the greatest danger threatened from the Moghul nobles of the imperial court, in whom the frequent revolutions of recent years had bred a spirit of unrest and want of discipline, which could at any moment burst forth into the flame of revolt.

There were only a very few men in the Emperor's immediate circle possessing the sterling qualities of loyalty of Bairam Khan and Tardi Beg ; the greater part were intent solely upon the furtherance of their own personal fortunes.

Regency of Bairam Khan.

The Emperor's youth made necessary the appointment of an adviser with powers almost as great as those of a Regent, and this high and responsible office was vested in the person of Bairam Khan, who received the titles of Khan Khanan or " Lord of Lords ", and Khan Baba or " Lord Father ".

The early days of Akbar's reign were difficult for the young sovereign, even in the comparatively small empire over which he was called upon to rule.

Hemu, Mohammed Shah Adili's faithful servant, had firmly established his master's supremacy in Bengal and

Bihar ; he had raised and equipped a magnificent force of 50,000 men with a park of heavy artillery and 500 elephants in Eastern India, and at the head of this formidable army he marched against Delhi with the object of restoring Mohammed Shah Adili to the imperial throne.

At the moment of this advance Akbar and Bairam Khan were still in the Punjab, and Tardi Beg, the Governor of Delhi, had only a small force with which to defend the capital. Under the very walls of the city he bravely gave battle to the Afghans, but the Moghul troops were completely overwhelmed by the disparity in numbers and suffered a crushing defeat. Tardi Beg sought refuge at Sirhind and the remnant of his army dispersed.

Capture of Delhi by Hemu.

Hemu made his entry into Delhi and instantly proclaimed the restoration of Mohammed Shah Adili to the throne of Hindustan, assuming for himself the ancient Hindu title of " Raja Vikramaditya ", Sun of Power.

Akbar was thus robbed of his capital and only the Punjab remained under his control, and, to add to the complexity of his position, he had for the time being lost his Afghan dominions, owing to the revolt of his viceroy at Kabul.

Summoning a council of war he asked the advice of his nobles upon the best course to pursue in face of this twofold peril, and their opinion was unanimous, Bairam Khan alone dissenting, that Akbar should abandon India and concentrate entirely upon the reconquest of Kabul, making no further attempt to leave Afghanistan until a propitious moment should arise for a renewed attempt to win back his sovereignty over India.

Bairam Khan alone urged the opposite line of conduct and based his advice upon the argument that he considered Delhi to be the real centre of Akbar's empire and not Kabul, and further he urged that the Emperor should lead his army across the Sutlej, effect a junction with Tardi Beg at Sirhind and then march boldly against Hemu, whom he regarded as the only really formidable enemy he was called upon to face. Without a moment's hesitation, Akbar decided in favour of the latter plan and gave orders for an immediate advance upon Sirhind.

It was here that an incident occurred which caused the first note of dissension between Bairam Khan, Akbar's adviser, and his imperial master.

There had always been great antagonism between Bairam Khan and Tardi Beg, due partly to the fact that the former belonged to the Shiah branch of Islam and the latter to the

Sunni, and even more to personal jealousy. This hatred had reached such a pitch of vehemence with Bairam Khan that no sooner had he arrived at Sirhind than he determined to remove his enemy from his path. On the plea that Tardi Beg had not shown sufficient spirit in his defence of Delhi and had abandoned the capital to the Afghans, he summoned him to his tent and gave orders for his immediate execution.

This cruel and totally uncalled-for deed, which had been performed without the young Emperor's knowledge and had deprived him of a faithful servant, produced such a deep and lasting impression upon Akbar, who bitterly resented the conduct of his adviser, that it is more than likely that he might have given serious proof of his displeasure had not, at that very moment, the destiny of the throne of India hung in the balance and forced all minor issues into the background.

Moghul Advance on Delhi.

Towards the end of October 1556, the young monarch and Bairam Khan took joint command of the Moghul army and commenced to march upon Delhi; their advance guard of 10,000 cavalry was led by Ali Kuli Khan-i-Shaibani, formerly Tardi Beg's subordinate in Delhi, and a man who combined to a remarkable degree military skill and reckless daring. At the head of his men Ali Kuli rode as far as Panipat without meeting with any opposition, but as they came upon the village they beheld the entire Afghan artillery park, guarded solely by its gunners and without any supporting force of cavalry or infantry.

With the swiftness of lightning the Moghul commander realised his advantage, and gave the word of command to his troopers to charge. The Afghans vainly attempted to save their guns but were completely swept aside, and the entire park, which had been obtained at great cost from Turkey, was captured by the Moghuls.

Akbar's joy at this brilliant feat was intense and, as a mark of gratitude, he immediately invested Ali Kuli with the exalted title of Khan Zaman, by which he was ever afterwards known.

Third Battle of Panipat.

On November 5 the main imperial force reached the plain of Panipat, and it was here that, advancing over the historic ground which had been the scene of his grandfather the Emperor Babur's conquest of India, Akbar beheld Hemu's formidable army moving towards him.

Hemu, in order to make up, if possible, for the loss of his artillery, had placed his war elephants in the front of his army, trusting that their weight might supply the necessary

protection. An officer of high rank was seated on each of these great beasts and Hemu himself occupied the howdah of the leading elephant, from this lofty position directing the movements of his troops. As he gave the signal to advance, the elephants, 500 in number, trumpeting loudly, charged full into the centre of the Moghul army, which at that very point was commanded by Bairam Khan in person. The terrific impact caused the troops to stagger, but their commander proved equal to the occasion and ordered the Moghul archers to concentrate and to aim at the faces of the officers who were mounted on the elephants. Hemu, his eye pierced by one of the Moghul arrows, fell back in his howdah fainting with agony, and his men, seeing him fall, believed him to be mortally wounded, and immediately showed signs of panic.

Bairam Khan, following up the advantage he had gained, gave the signal for the Moghul cavalry to advance and within a short time he had won a decisive victory, the Afghan army breaking up and scattering in all directions.

The driver of Hemu's elephant had been killed and the powerful beast, with the unconscious general still in the howdah, was captured by a small body of Moghul cavalry.

Hemu was brought to Akbar and Bairam Khan, and, turning to his young sovereign, the Regent said: "This is your first war; prove your sword on this infidel, for it will be a meritorious deed". To these words the Emperor replied: "He is now no better than a dead man; how can I strike him? If he had sense and strength I would try my sword".[1]

Even these noble words failed to stir any feeling of pity for a fallen enemy in Bairam Khan's fierce heart, and in the presence of the Emperor, who shrank from him in horror, he drew his sword and slew the stricken captive with his own hand. This outrage widened the rift between Akbar and his adviser, which had first been caused by the execution of Tardi Beg.

The victory of Panipat, though it did not bring with it the subjugation of all Akbar's foes, and though he had many perils yet to face, established him permanently upon the throne of Hindustan.

During the following four years Akbar dwelt alternately in Delhi and Agra, and the latter city came to be generally regarded as the second capital of the empire.

The only military expedition undertaken at that period by the young sovereign was against Sikandar Shah Sur, who

[1] *Tarikh-i-Badauni*, vol. iii. p. 16. See Elliot, vol. v.

had taken refuge in the strong fortress of Mankot at the foot of the Sewaliks.

Submission of Sikandar Sur.

After a protracted siege the garrison was compelled to surrender, and Sikandar proceeded to the Moghul camp to make his personal submission to the Emperor.

The chivalrous reception given to his enemy and the generous terms granted to him were the first definite indications of the lines upon which Akbar intended to constitute his government. He was fully aware that of all the members of the house of Sur, Sikandar alone was redoubtable owing to his great personal qualities as a military leader, whereas Mohammed Shah Adili had ceased to be dangerous from the moment of Hemu's death ; yet when Sikandar arrived in his presence, Akbar, instead of ordering his internment in a fortress as a prisoner of state, received him as an honoured guest, and, by imperial grant, bestowed upon him the rich province of Bihar, where his ancestor Sher Shah had risen to greatness, as a fief held from the Crown.

Akbar returned to Delhi, and there were no striking political events between this incident and the year 1560, but unknown even to his court, the ever-increasing antagonism of the Emperor for the methods of his adviser Bairam Khan was slowly paving the way towards great and fundamental changes.

Bairam Khan possessed all the characteristics of the typical Central Asian Mohammedan of the early days ; he served his master loyally and was just in his dealings with followers of his own faith, provided he entertained no feelings of personal enmity towards them, but, where Hindus were concerned, he remained irreconcilable. He looked upon them as the infidel members of a subject race, whose religion was allowed to continue only because it was too powerful to repress and also because the *jiziya* or poll-tax exacted from those professing it brought a substantial revenue to the imperial coffers, but he refused absolutely to recognise any claim on their part to civil rights such as the Musulman population was allowed to enjoy.

Akbar's vision.

In complete contradiction to the reactionary views held by his adviser, the idealistic mind of the young Emperor was, dimly at first, but with gradually increasing distinctness, evolving a scheme of a very different nature.

There arose before him a new India of his own creation; an India no longer the land of warring creeds but a home in which all were permitted to worship the Deity according to the tenets of their own faith, and his imagination pictured

the Rajput princes, won over from their inherited bitterness to his house, surrounding his throne as staunch and loyal supporters.

The youthful Akbar suffered keenly during those years, when, unable to free himself from the domination of Bairam Khan, and surrounded by men not one of whom would have understood his ideals, he was forced to live outwardly the life of a typical Oriental monarch, whilst the secret world of his soul was filled with dreams and ambitions for the future, which he could tell to none.

It was at this turning point in his life that a poor Brahmin minstrel of Kalpi in Central India, named Mahesh Das, came to the Emperor's court, and was the first of a small number of men who in due course enjoyed Akbar's friendship and became his admirers and, in a sense, his disciples.

Mahesh Das was a remarkable personality and combined rare talent as a poet with a strong sense of humour liberally coloured with cynicism, which appeared to spare no man nor to consider any subject too sacred to be held up to ridicule. Akbar, however, divined a deep and genuine idealism beneath the caustic and often bitter sayings of the Brahmin, and he was not deceived, for Mahesh Das' loyalty, once given, was never withdrawn, and in him the lonely young sovereign at length found a kindred spirit, ever ready to listen to, and to sympathise with, his hopes and ambitions for the future.

From this personal friendship with a Hindu he gathered strength to persevere in his determination to break down the barriers, political, social and, above all, spiritual, which divided him from the Hindu subjects of his empire.

With this fixed purpose in his mind came the realisation that progress was impossible so long as he remained under the tutelage of Bairam Khan and, although he still desired, if feasible, to avoid a final rupture between himself and his adviser, to whom he owed a debt of gratitude for many years of loyal service, he decided to take the reins of government into his own hands and to assume the personal responsibility for the weal and woe of his country.

Great secrecy and precautions were necessary in the development of the Emperor's scheme, for Bairam Khan had not remained ignorant of the fact that his moral power over Akbar was on the wane and, to strengthen his position, had for some time past appointed many of his personal adherents to the highest offices of state, and, amongst these, twenty-five had been raised to the dignity of *Panj Hazari* or com-

mander of 5000, which was looked upon as the most exalted military rank.

One of the Emperor's most powerful supporters, all the more perhaps because her influence was exercised in secret, existed in the person of his foster-mother, the famous Mahum Anagah. It was owing to this remarkable woman that Akbar had, when a child of four, been saved from almost certain death as a result of the inhuman methods of his uncle Kamran. This incident took place during the stormy years of Humayun's exile from the throne, when he was fighting his brother for the possession of Kabul. Kamran had placed the child Akbar, who had fallen into his hands, in one of the most open positions of the ramparts of the city, hoping that Humayun would raise the siege sooner than risk the life of his son, and it was then that Mahum Anagah forced her way to the battlements and shielded the child with her own body. Personal motives also played a part in her desire to see Bairam Khan divested of his power, for she hoped that, the Emperor's authority fully established, he would appoint her son Adham Khan, for whom her ambition was boundless, to an important post.

Assisted by his foster-mother, the Emperor carefully prepared his plans and, in March 1560, left Agra accompanied by only a few of his personal attendants, ostensibly to give a hunting party near Koil on the Jumna.

Arrived at this spot he commanded his cousin Prince Abul Kasim, the son of his uncle Kamran, to join him, so as to prevent any possible attempt on the part of Bairam Khan to establish him as a rival claimant to the throne.

He then proceeded to Delhi, nominally to visit his mother Hamida Begum, who resided there, but, in point of fact, that he might have the personal support of Syed Shahab-ud-Din Ahmed, a kinsman of Mahum Anagah and Governor of the capital, and one of the very few who shared the secret of the changes he contemplated.

Arrived at Delhi, where the garrison was completely under the Governor's control, Akbar felt sufficiently secure openly to declare his intentions.

Fall of Bairam Khan. Akbar assumes the government.

The following message from the Emperor was forthwith despatched to Bairam Khan: "As I was fully assured of your honesty and fidelity, I left all important affairs of state in your charge and thought only of my pleasures. I have now determined to take the reins of government into my own hands, and it is desirable that you should now make the pilgrimage to Mecca, upon which you have been so long

intent. A suitable *jagir* (fief) out of the *parganas* of Hindustan shall be assigned for your maintenance, the revenues of which shall be transmitted to you by your agents." [1]

Bairam Khan had, as we mentioned before, begun to realise that his day of greatness was at an end, and even before this message reached him had left Agra with the intention of proceeding to Mecca on pilgrimage ; but with the certainty of his downfall came a feeling of such intense mortification and bitterness that he determined to revenge himself by drawing the sword against his sovereign. Outwardly he appeared to accept his dismissal in a loyal spirit and returned the insignia of his rank as Khan Khanan to the Emperor, after which he departed for the Rajput state of Bikanir, where for some time he resided under the protection of the Raja Kalyan Mal.

From Bikanir the fallen statesman went to the Punjab and there threw off the mask, and without further hesitation placed himself at the head of a force composed of his personal adherents and openly challenged the Emperor's supremacy.

Akbar replied by sending an army to the Punjab under the command of Shams-ud-Din Mohammed Atgah Khan, who had been given the high title of Khan-i-Azam, and who was identical with that humble private soldier who had, with the assistance of a comrade, years before, saved the life of the Emperor Humayun when in danger of drowning after the disaster of Kanauj.

Shams-ud-Din's wife, Ji Ji Anagah by name, had been Akbar's second foster-mother, and she and her husband were both whole-heartedly loyal to the young Emperor. At Dagdar, near the town of Jalandhar in the Punjab, the army of the Khan-i-Azam came into touch with Bairam Khan's forces.

In spite of the fact that most of the military commanders who had owed their advancement to Bairam Khan had deserted him when he fell from power, his own skill in the field remained so great that at first he seemed likely to be successful, but eventually Shams-ud-Din, supported by the imperial troops, gained a complete victory and Bairam Khan fled to Taliwara in the Sewaliks, where he took refuge with the local Hindu Raja. A detachment of the Khan-i-Azam's soldiers pursued him on his flight and a brief but sharp contest ensued, in the course of which one

[1] *Nizam-ud-Din Ahmed, Tabakat-i-Akbari*, Elliot, vol. v. p. 264.

of Bairam Khan's most devoted friends, Sultan Hussein Jalair, was slain.

His head was brought to Bairam Khan, and the grief-stricken commander exclaimed with tears in his eyes: "This life of mine is not worth so much that a man like this should be killed in my defence".[1] He immediately despatched a letter to Akbar containing his unconditional surrender and, in reply, the Emperor sent the Makhdum-ul-Mulk, chief Sunni Musulman ecclesiastic in India, to bring Bairam to his camp at Jalandhar. Undeterred by the exhortations of his adherents not to trust to Akbar's clemency, Bairam agreed without demur and accompanied the imperial envoy, and, on arrival at Jalandhar, was treated with every courtesy and immediately escorted into the Emperor's presence. The meeting was tense with emotion, and for the space of a few minutes the commander who had grown grey in the service of the house of Timur, and the young sovereign who had freed himself from his control, gazed mutely at each other, but Akbar's generous mind had already forgiven Bairam Khan's act of revolt, and dwelt only upon his record of faithful service to Humayun during his exile, and of magnificent assistance to himself on the field of Panipat.

Moved by a sudden impulse he drew the splendid imperial robe from his own shoulders and with a gracious and protective gesture flung it over Bairam Khan and then, taking him by the hand, led him back to his original place at the head of the nobles. Addressing the entire court, the Emperor spoke the following words: "If Bairam Khan loves a military life, the Governorship of Kalpi offers a field for his ambition. If he prefers to remain at court, our favour will never be wanting to the benefactor of our family. But if he chooses devotion, he shall be escorted to Mecca with all the honour due to his rank and receive a pension of 50,000 rupees annually."[2] Bairam felt that, of the three alternatives offered by the Emperor, it was his duty to accept the last, and, amidst every manifestation of genuine repentance on his own part and of affection and kindness on the side of Akbar, the two men parted. Bairam started for the port of Cambay, whence he intended to embark for Mecca, but this pilgrimage was never carried out, for, at the ancient capital of Anhilvara in Gujarat, where he broke his journey in order to visit a celebrated Hindu temple, he was,

[1] *Nizam-ud-Din Ahmed, Tabakat-i-Akbari*, Elliot, vol. v. p. 267.
[2] Briggs' *Ferishta*.

whilst actually at the shrine, stabbed by an Afghan named Mubarak Khan Lohani, whose father he had slain in battle. Akbar was deeply affected when he heard of the crime and at once gave orders that the deceased Khan Khanan's family should come to Agra, and Bairam's four-year-old son Abdurrahim was taken under the Emperor's special protection and was brought up to fill his father's place as head of the nobles and to become one of the main pillars of Akbar's throne.

The time seemed now to have come when the Emperor would be able to devote himself to the carrying into execution of the internal reforms which he had so carefully planned, but he was soon brought to realise that those who had assisted him to emancipate himself from his adviser's tutelage possessed almost as little understanding for the actual aims he had at heart as Bairam Khan himself.

Campaign of Adham Khan in Malwa.

Certain events in the history of Malwa after the accession to the imperial throne of Sher Shah Sur must be mentioned here as bearing indirectly upon Akbar's subsequent actions.

When Sher Shah Sur achieved the conquest of that province it had been without a ruling head since the defeat of Bahadur Shah of Gujarat by Humayun, and the new king appointed as his Governor at Mandu one of his relatives named Shuja'at Khan. This man on his death was succeeded in the governorship by his son Baz Bahadur, who, in the upheaval which followed the downfall of the house of Sur, proclaimed himself King of Malwa, and, at the moment when Akbar shook off Bairam Khan's yoke, was still occupying the throne.

Baz Bahadur was a true Pathan in point of courage and of daring, but he scorned the cruelty so typical of his race and, though a devout Musulman, was totally without bigotry. He made no difference between his Moslem and Hindu subjects, treating them with equal kindness and being almost extravagantly generous, and he was beloved by all without distinction of race and creed. He was considered the most gifted musician and composer of Hindi songs in India, and much of his inspiration came to him from his mistress Rupmati, a beautiful Hindu nautch girl, who herself, like so many of her class a talented poetess and composer, exercised the dominant influence in his life.

Akbar had no personal ground for complaint against Baz Bahadur, but he looked upon Malwa as one of the keys to Rajputana, the heart of Hindu India, and realised that it would be impossible fully to develop his scheme for a

friendly understanding with the Rajputs so long as Malwa remained an independent Afghan kingdom.

In 1561 the Emperor decided to attempt the conquest of Malwa and despatched an army to invade the country, which, at the earnest request of Mahum Anagah, he placed under the command of her son Adham Khan.

Baz Bahadur put up a brave defence, but in the end he was completely defeated and compelled to fly from Mandu, which was immediately occupied by the imperial forces, and Rupmati and all the ladies of his harem fell into the hands of Adham Khan.

Akbar in his desire to fulfil Mahum Anagah's wishes had thought mainly of his foster-brother's skill and bravery as a soldier, but had not reckoned with his innate arrogance nor with the fact that he was never known to put a curb upon his passions.

Adham Khan took possession of Baz Bahadur's entire harem and sent a message to Rupmati that he expected her henceforth to receive him and to look upon him as her lord in place of the defeated King of Malwa.

At first she hoped by evasive replies to postpone the terrible issue, but eventually she realised that Adham Khan was irrevocably bent upon her submission and she feigned consent. The meeting was to take place at the beautiful water pavilion specially constructed by Baz Bahadur for his mistress, which is preserved up to the present day and considered one of the finest buildings in Mandu.

At the appointed hour Adham Khan betook himself to the pavilion and approached the couch upon which Rupmati, clad in magnificent robes and covered with lovely jewels, was reclining. The flowery speeches died upon his lips as he realised that no answering voice came in greeting and discovered the inanimate body of the beautiful nautch girl, who had succumbed to poison administered by her own hand, preferring death to the fate which awaited her.

Akbar proceeds to Malwa.

Akbar, who was at Agra at the time, was roused to extreme anger by the news of Adham Khan's violation of the laws of Oriental warfare, which demanded that any general capturing prisoners of war had to hand them over to the sovereign; and above all, the tragic fate of Rupmati stirred the Emperor's generous nature to its very depths. He at once proceeded to Malwa at the head of a sufficient number of troops to put down any possible attempt at rebellion and to ascertain personally the line of conduct adopted by Adham Khan.

Intrigues of Mahum Anagah.

Mahum Anagah, fearing that the Emperor's displeasure might seriously endanger her son's future career, sent a messenger to warn him of the sovereign's approach, but Akbar's progress was so rapid that he reached Adham Khan's headquarters at Sarangpur some time before her messenger, and thus defeated her plan.

At the moment of Akbar's arrival, Adham Khan was absent, and his stupefaction when, on his return, he found the Emperor in the camp was such that he had barely sufficient presence of mind to dismount from his horse and make the necessary obeisance. Mahum Anagah, accompanied by the ladies of the imperial harem, had also set out for Sarangpur, which she did not, however, reach until a day after the Emperor's arrival. Immediately seeking the presence of her son she besought him to surrender all his spoils of war to Akbar and to meet his sovereign in a spirit of humility and contrition. Adham Khan with some reluctance decided to follow his mother's advice and surrendered the captives to the Emperor, whose anger was to a certain extent appeased by this act of submission.

Akbar selected two beautiful slave girls for his own harem, but, during the preparations which followed for the Emperor's return to Agra and the breaking up of the imperial camp, Adham Khan, whose change of attitude had never been genuine, succeeded in abducting the two slave girls, whose absence was only discovered by Akbar when he had proceeded for some distance on his homeward march. He immediately despatched a body of horsemen to recover them, but the unhappy victims were intercepted by Mahum Anagah, who, fearing that they might divulge to the Emperor some of the indignities to which they had been subjected by her son, had them brutally murdered.

Akbar forgave Mahum Anagah for committing this terrible crime, because his generous nature could not forget the claims she had upon his gratitude for the care she had bestowed upon him at a tender age, but his confidence in her was never restored and he determined to take measures to limit the power she exercised at the court to the very utmost.

He recalled Adham Khan from Malwa and replaced the Wazir Munim Khan, one of Mahum Anagah's strongest supporters, by Shams-ud-Din Mohammed Atgah Khan.

With the appointment of Shams-ud-Din, the imperial court became divided, one faction favouring Mahum Anagah and Adham Khan, and the other supporting the new Wazir and his wife. From that time onwards Mahum Anagah

never ceased to encourage her son in his hatred of their rivals and to fill his mind with plans for their extinction.

At length on May 16, 1562, Adham Khan showed himself in his true colours, and bursting into the imperial audience chamber with several of his followers just as a council was in progress, rushed up to the Wazir and, before he could offer any resistance, stabbed him to the heart.

Still clasping the dagger in his hand with which he had committed the foul deed, the murderer made his way to the imperial apartments and openly boasted that, as the Emperor's foster-brother, he was sure of the sovereign's protection.

Akbar, who had been roused from his sleep by the tumult around, met him at the entrance to the harem and, far from according the self-confessed murderer the shelter for which he pleaded, wrenched himself free from his grasp and dealt him a furious blow which felled Adham Khan unconscious to the ground. The Emperor's sense of justice, one of the finest traits in his character, when outraged, admitted no extenuating circumstances; he summoned the guards and commanded them to bind the assassin and fling him from the battlements of the palace.

Whilst these terrible events were in progress, Mahum Anagah was confined to her apartments by illness and, though she had been informed of the murder of Shams-ud-Din, she was as yet in complete ignorance of the terrible punishment meted out to her son. She begged an audience of the Emperor with the intention of pleading for clemency for Adham Khan and was received by Akbar with the greatest kindness, and he himself broke to her as tenderly as he could the circumstances under which her son had expiated his crime. This was probably the hardest task the Emperor was called upon to face during the whole of his long reign. The heart-broken mother returned to her own home, but all desire to live had gone from her and she died within forty days of the execution of the son to attain whose advancement no crime was too great and for whose tragic end she was largely responsible.

Akbar desired above all else that the spirit of enmity fostered by Mahum Anagah and her son should cease with their deaths, and in order to conciliate both factions of the court, he paid equal homage to the memory of his foster-mother and Adham Khan, and to that of Shams-ud-Din, the victim of their misguided policy.

Mahum Anagah was accorded a state funeral, which was

attended by the Emperor in person and by his entire court, and a splendid tomb was erected in the vicinity of the Kutub Minar at Delhi, over her and her son's remains, whilst an equally fine monument marked the resting-place of the Wazir Shams-ud-Din, near the shrine of Nizam-ud-Din Aulia in the imperial capital.

This same spirit of justice caused Akbar to accord a free pardon to all those who had followed Adham Khan into the chamber of audience, knowing of his intention to assassinate the Wazir, and to the murdered man's eldest son, Yusuf Mohammed, who, immediately following the death of his father, had called upon his kinsmen to help him in exacting vengeance for the crime.

These wise measures adopted by the sovereign brought about a peaceful era in the imperial court, and Akbar in the following year had a great occasion, which he was quick to grasp, of advancing the ideals he had at heart on a larger scale.

Marriage of Akbar to the Princess of Amber.

The primary incident which gave rise to this opportunity took place as far back as 1540 after the battle of Kanauj, when one of Humayun's generals, Majnun Khan by name, had been cut off from the main body of Humayun's army and surrounded by the Afghan forces. In his extremity he appealed to Bihari Mal, Raja of Amber and head of the Kachwaha clan of Rajputs, and begged him to mediate with Sher Shah to permit his peaceful withdrawal. The chivalrous Rajput prince acceded to the officer's appeal and exhibited so much tact in his negotiations with Sher Shah that he finally prevailed upon him to allow the Moghuls to retire unmolested and to join their sovereign.

On January 24, 1562, Akbar, who was on pilgrimage to the shrine of the Musulman saint Muin-ud-Din Chisti at Ajmere, received an urgent appeal for help from this same Bihari Mal, who had to come to the rescue of Humayun's officer, and who now wrote that Amber was being attacked by one of the local Moghul *jagirdars* named Sharif-ud-Din Hussein.

The Emperor, gratefully remembering the Rajput prince's past services to his house, sent a peremptory message to his vassal commanding him instantly to cease hostilities and, simultaneously, he invited the Raja most cordially to visit him in his camp.

Shortly afterwards Bihari Mal arrived accompanied by his son Bhagwan Das, his grandson Man Singh and his daughter, and during the few days which the Rajputs spent

as honoured guests in the imperial camp, a warm regard sprang up between the dignified and courteous Hindu prince and the young Moghul sovereign. Akbar, with quick intuition, probably felt that the sympathy between them was something more than superficial, and it is not unlikely that he allowed Bihari Mal a glimpse into the more intimate recesses of his mind, for, just as the Emperor was about to depart for Agra, the Rajput prince offered him the hand of his daughter in marriage and begged to be allowed to be enrolled an officer of the empire.

Akbar enthusiastically agreed to both these striking requests and his marriage to the young Rajputni took place immediately in the imperial camp amidst great rejoicings.

The Raja of Amber was given the rank of *Panj Hazari* in the imperial army, and his son and grandson received military posts only slightly inferior to his, and in the course of time became two of the most illustrious figures of the Emperor's court.

As Akbar rode back to Agra from Ajmere, his proud heart could not fail to be elated by the knowledge that he had by his genius and the magnetism of his personality achieved more than could ever have been won by the sword. He had broken down a moral barrier more formidable than the ramparts of the most impregnable fortress ; he had united the great houses of Rama and of Timur, and had taken the first step on the path of reconciliation and peace between Musulman and Hindu.

His arrival at Agra was marked by an imperial decree abolishing for all time the barbarous custom which had included the wives and families of defeated enemies in the spoils of war, a decree most probably the outcome of the horror which the tragic fate of Rupmati had aroused in Akbar's mind.

Revolt of Malwa.

In this same year, 1562, the Emperor instead of being able to devote all his energies and concentrate all his efforts upon the great internal reforms he had so much at heart, was faced with difficulties from outside.

Unfortunately he had not made a wise selection in the person of Pir Mohammed Khan, his former tutor, whom he had appointed Governor of Malwa when he recalled Adham Khan ; this man, though endowed with considerable personal courage, did not combine with it the requisite discrimination and military skill, and he dissipated the strength of the forces under his command in a series of, for the most part, unnecessary expeditions into Central India.

This ill-advised policy encouraged Baz Bahadur, the ex-King of Malwa, to invade his former kingdom, where many of his previous vassals and subjects returned to his banner. Pir Mohammed, at the head of his troops, attempted to stay his progress, but found his men so greatly outnumbered that he retreated towards Mandu in the hope of being able to defend the fortress until reinforcements from Agra could reach him.

Whilst he and his officers were fording the river Narbada, a camel bit the commander's horse and the terrified animal threw its rider, who was drowned before any attempt at rescue could be made.

Baz Bahadur reconquered the whole of Malwa and managed, for a short time, to maintain his rule in Mandu, but eventually Akbar's superior strength gained the day and he was completely defeated and forced to take refuge in Mewar, where he sought the protection of the reigning Maharana Udai Singh, the son of the heroic Kurnavati. He dwelt at Chitor until finally, wearying of a life of exile, he offered his submission to Akbar and, after a short period of imprisonment, was invited by the Emperor to Agra, where he was soon raised to the highest rank of the nobility and appointed commander of 2000 in the imperial army.

Abolition of the *jiziya*.

In the year 1565 the Emperor gave further significant proof of his enlightened policy by putting an end to the infamous *jiziya* or poll-tax on Hindus, first introduced by Ala-ud-Din Khilji.

Akbar's friendship with the Brahmin Mahesh Das, mentioned in the earlier part of this chapter, his marriage to a Rajput princess and his intimate association with the Amber princes constantly increased his sympathy with Hinduism and Hindu modes of thought and produced a far-reaching effect upon his administration, his ideals and, in due course, upon his faith.

In pursuance of his plan to conciliate the Rajput states, which had been inaugurated by his marriage to the daughter of Bihari Mal, the Emperor had also won the allegiance of Kalyan Mal of Bikanir, whose heir, Rai Singh, entered the imperial service and whose niece, at a later period, became one of the imperial consorts.

In Marwar, which was ruled by the elder branch of the Rathor dynasty, Akbar's efforts at establishing friendly relations were met in a spirit of unrelenting hostility by his father's old enemy Mal Deo ; but the most serious problem

of all he found in Mewar in the attitude adopted by the Maharana Udai Singh.

Akbar's first campaign in Mewar.

This ruler was one of the very few of the long line of princes descended from Bappa Rawal who was unworthy of his great heritage. He resembled his half-brother Bikramajit in point of arrogance but lacked his redeeming quality of courage, and his rejection of all Akbar's proposals for an agreement sprang far more from the innate obstinacy of his character than from the legitimate pride which made it unthinkable to the great vassal chieftains of the Sesodia kingdom to consent to even the most nominal form of allegiance to the Musulman. They looked upon Bihari Mal of Amber and Kalyan of Bikanir with execration, as traitors, because they had united their houses in marriage with that of Akbar. Their ancestors had stood behind Prithvi Raj on the fatal day of Talawari, and every following generation had been brought up in unrelenting hatred of the "Toork". In their eyes the Emperor's liberal policy constituted a far greater danger to their race than the fanatic bigotry of Shahab-ud-Din of Ghor and Ala-ud-Din Khilji.

Akbar was no lover of conquest for its own sake, and he found it hard to relinquish his dreams of a friendly union between Moslem and Hindu, but gradually the conviction came to him that these ideals could not be realised so long as the power of Mewar remained unbroken, and that it was necessary not only to crush the military strength of the Sesodia kingdom, but also to put a definite end to the great moral leadership which the Sun of the Hindus exercised over the other Rajput princes.

By the month of September 1567, all preparations were completed and Akbar himself led his army against Mewar. The selection of his principal officers gave further proof of the immense importance which he attached to the political aspect of the campaign, for one of the most prominent commands was given to the Khatri, Todar Mal, and other high military posts were assigned to Bhagwan Das of Amber and his nephew Man Singh.

Todar Mal, whose early career in the service of Sher Shah has been previously mentioned, possessed considerable military ability, and Akbar, who was quick to notice this, bestowed upon him the title of Raja and he became in due course one of the greatest figures in the empire.

By Akbar's choice of Hindus for such responsible appointments, he gave further proof to his vassals of that race that he trusted in their loyalty even when put to the test against

their own people, and also that he regarded the campaign as in no sense directed against Hinduism, but as a means of bringing the kingdom of Mewar into the confederacy of the other Rajput states.

As soon as the news of the approach of the imperial army reached Udai Singh he fled from Chitor to the strongholds of the Aravalli mountains and left the Rawat of Salumbar, hereditary prime minister and chief vassal of the kingdom, to defend the capital.

In the month of October Akbar reached Chitor and immediately made his preparations for a siege, which was continued for close upon two months without any signs of weakening on the part of his brave opponents.

In the hope of achieving decisive results and making a breach in the walls of the fortress, Akbar then gave orders to his engineers to construct two mines, the first of which was fired at the exact moment intended, but the second exploded too late and, though one of the principal bastions was destroyed, and with it the troops detailed off to garrison it, it also killed hundreds of Moghuls, including several of the leading nobles of the imperial court.

The Moghuls, in spite of this terrible disaster, never faltered nor lost faith in their sovereign's judgement, and this was largely due to the fact that Akbar shared all the risks and vicissitudes of war with his soldiers and that it was his habit throughout the duration of the siege of Chitor to place himself in one of the most exposed positions, his favourite matchlock " Singram " in his hands, and endeavour to pick off the enemy sharpshooters.

At dawn on February 24, 1568, orders were issued by Akbar for a general assault, and the imperial army advanced towards the gates of the city and directed their main attack against the "Suraj Pol" or Gate of the Sun, where the Rawat, Sain Das of Salumbar, was in personal command. The brave Rajput leader fell mortally wounded in the early part of the struggle, and the command now devolved upon Patta, Rawat of Kelwa, another of the great feudatories of Mewar.

This young chief, who had only attained the age of sixteen, and who had quite recently married a maiden to whom he was most tenderly attached, went to the palace to pay a brief visit to his bride and to bid her what he felt would be a last farewell before taking his place at the post of honour.

The young Rajputni betrayed no sign of weakness during the parting moments, but when her lord left her and, mount-

ing his steed, rode to the "Suraj Pol", he was unaware that the soldiers who followed him had been increased by one and that wherever he moved on that fateful day, a slim figure clad in armour kept close behind him with lance uplifted ready to shield him from the danger of an enemy attack.

After a terrific struggle the heroic defenders were overwhelmed, and amongst the dead lay Patta of Kelwa, his sword clasped in his hand, and close to him his young wife, who had sought death as soon as she saw her husband fall.

Even in their terrible plight, the Sesodias would not surrender, and as the cry of *Jai Bhavani!* rang out, another of the sixteen great nobles of Mewar, Jai Mal Rathor, chief of Bednore, came forward at the head of his men and filled the depleted ranks. Jai Mal, conspicuous by his magnificently embossed suit of armour, stood for a moment in full view of Akbar, who occupied his customary post, and the Emperor, raising his matchlock, fired, with the result that the gallant Rajput fell to the ground mortally wounded.

Nightfall necessitated a temporary lull in the fighting, and suddenly the darkness which had settled over the beleaguered city was illuminated by the most vivid glow, which showed clearly that not a single Rajput now remained on the ramparts. The Emperor, as he beheld this strange sight, wondered what it portended, and just then the warning words of Man Singh of Amber sounded in his ear: "Be on your guard, it is the *Johur*".[1] The Moghuls stood at arms all through the night, but at dawn the walls of the city still appeared entirely deserted, and Akbar, mounting his elephant, led his troops into Chitor. The streets were completely empty and a heavy pall of smoke hung over all, the only outward sign of the self-imposed death by fire of the nine queens, five princesses and the wives and daughters of all the great feudatories of Mewar.

Akbar and his soldiers continued their progress unopposed until they reached the heart of the city, where the palace of the Maharana was situated.

Capture of Chitor.

Then all of a sudden from every window not only of the palace but also of all the neighbouring houses Rajput matchlocks blazed out and the Moghuls were forced to fight their way street by street under this relentless fire, until dusk, when the enemy resistance was finally broken and the Emperor found himself master of Chitor.

On the following day the Moslem nobles begged Akbar, in celebration of his victory against the infidel, to assume

[1] Graf von Noer, *The Emperor Akbar*, vol. i. p. 168.

the title of *Ghazi* or Warrior of the Islamic faith, but this request was met with instant refusal by the Emperor on the ground that, by its assumption, he would be repaying the loyal services of some of his staunchest allies in the campaign against Mewar by an insult to their faith.

Chitor remained a city of the dead, and although in due course the power of the Sesodia princes revived, they ruled their kingdom from another capital, and the rock-girt seat, sanctified by the heroism of their ancestors, was abandoned for all time.

Submission of Bundi.

After his victory at Chitor, Akbar led his troops against the fortress of Rinthambur, which Surjan Hara, Rao of Bundi, held as a fief of Mewar.

It was known to the Emperor that the relations of this brave and able ruler with Udai Singh had for some time been somewhat strained and he therefore hoped not only to gain Rinthambur but also to win the allegiance of the Prince of Bundi.

Man Singh of Amber was despatched into the fortress under a flag of truce, accompanied by two *chobdars* or mace-bearers, and Akbar himself was disguised as one of these.

Surjan Hara received the imperial envoy in the audience chamber of the castle, and, the preliminaries and compliments having been exchanged, negotiations were about to commence when, to the amazement of all assembled, one of Rao Surjan's uncles, who had been gazing fixedly at one of the mace-bearers, approached him and, making a low obeisance, took the mace from his hand and conducted him to the place of honour. Akbar's features were well known to most of the Rajput princes and the Hara chief had recognised him almost immediately. The Emperor received this unexpected homage with complete calmness and cordially greeting Surjan Hara, remarked : " Well, Rao Surjan, what is to be done ? "[1]

Man Singh of Amber forestalled the Hara prince's reply with the words : " Leave the Rana, give up Rinthambur, and become the servant of the king with high honours, and office."

Man Singh then drew up a treaty in Akbar's name which was accepted by the Prince of Bundi and the terms of which reflected the highest credit upon both signatories.

This treaty marked a new era in the relations of Hindu and Musulman. It contained two most important clauses, one declaring that the Raos of Bundi should never be asked

[1] Tod's *Rajasthan*, vol. ii. p. 382.

to give a daughter of their house to the Emperor in marriage; and another granting them the privilege of entering the presence of the sovereign in full armour but at the same time exempting them from the customary genuflections.

The final paragraph of the treaty guaranteed that the city of Bundi should during all future generations remain the inviolate capital of the Haras just as Delhi was to the line of Timur, and Akbar swore solemnly on the Koran to abide faithfully by all these conditions. The Rao of Bundi accepted the suzerainty of the Emperor and was granted the revenues of fifty-two districts and presented by the sovereign with a palace in the Hindu sacred city of Benares, which provided sanctuary for any offenders of that faith.

Up to this time and in spite of occasional feuds with the Sesodias, the Hara princes had considered themselves tributaries of Mewar; Akbar by raising his new vassal to the position of Raja, a higher title than that of Rao, emphasised the independence of Bundi from all but the imperial government.

Surjan Hara, acting as Akbar's general, proved his worth in the ensuing years by conquering the wild aboriginal tribes of Gondvana, and eventually became imperial Governor of Benares. Immediately on his return to Agra from Rinthambur, Akbar, by a very gracious act, sought to remove any lingering feeling of bitterness at the downfall of Mewar from the hearts of his Rajput feudatories. He gave orders to the sculptors of the court to carve life-size statues of Jai Mal of Bednore and of Patta of Kelwa, each figure seated on an elephant, which, when completed, were placed outside the main gateway of the imperial palace.

Thus, when the Rajput princes of the empire rode to the palace to attend the imperial durbar, they always beheld the two effigies of the heroes of Chitor and received tangible proof that their sovereign desired to associate himself with them in honouring their legitimate pride of race.

Subsequent events all tended to strengthen the bond of friendship between the Moghul dynasty and the Rajput reigning houses, for, shortly after the fall of Chitor, the aged Mal Deo, Rao of Marwar, realised that by holding aloof he was risking the danger of complete isolation. His feelings towards the house of Timur had not undergone any genuine change, but he tendered his allegiance to Akbar and sent his eldest surviving son, Udai Singh, as his representative to the imperial court. The heir apparent of Marwar was free from the prejudices of his father, and the Emperor so

completely won him over to his point of view that a friendship developed so lasting that many years later he bestowed the hand of his daughter Jodh Bai on Akbar's heir.

In the year 1569 news reached Agra of the death of Mal Deo in Jodhpur, and Udai Singh became his successor upon the throne of Marwar.

Meanwhile the Emperor's consort, the daughter of Bihari Mal of Amber, had taken up her residence under the roof of the Musulman saint Shaikh Salim Chisti, in the town of Sikri, and it was there that Akbar's son was born.

Birth of Prince Salim.

The child received the name of Salim in gratitude to the saint to whose prayers he attributed the fulfilment of his hopes of a son in whose veins should flow the blood of Rama and Timur.

The day of the public durbar which took place in honour of the birth of his heir was, indeed, the proudest of his life and, as he gazed upon the Rajput princes who surrounded his throne, Akbar felt that, though there might yet be difficulties on his path of progress, the greatest had been overcome, and the dreams of the lonely boy whose early youth had been so largely overshadowed by the masterful spirit of Bairam Khan had been realised to a degree far surpassing his expectations.

Religious situation. Meeting of Akbar with Faizi.

Hinduism, from its earliest existence up to the present day, has never been a proselytising faith and has only aspired to the same tolerance for itself that it has always extended to other religions.

Akbar's difficulties came from the side of Islam for the reason that as far back as the invasion of India by Shahab-ud-Din of Ghor, this ruler had built up his empire on the foundation of the supremacy of Islam over "Idolatry", and, before the Emperor could hope to achieve his aim of a union of races, it was necessary for him to create a liberal Musulman party at the court which would loyally assist him in working out his new policy.

At this time one of two brothers who later on became the Emperor's most intimate and devoted friends and supporters came into prominence at the court. These two brothers were named respectively Faizi and Abul Fazl, and were the sons of a religious teacher called Shaikh Mubarak. Faizi, the first to appear on the scene, though a young man, had already achieved considerable fame as a poet.

The father and sons were followers of the Shiah branch of Islam, but their Shiahism was so greatly blended with the mystical ideals of the Sufis that they were looked upon as

complete heretics by the bigoted Sunni clergy of Delhi and Agra, and especially so by the Sunni Chief Justice, the Makhdum-ul-Mulk, with whom Shiahism was unpopular and Sufism anathema. As a result they had already in the early days of Akbar's reign become objects of persecution by the Ulema.

Akbar's foster-brother, Aziz Khan Koka, a younger son of the murdered Shams-ud-Din Atgah Khan, and one of the sincerest Moslem supporters of the Emperor's liberal policy, had first mentioned Faizi to him during the siege of Chitor by the imperial troops, and it showed Akbar's wonderful grasp of the situation that he did not allow the great task upon which he was engaged to prevent him from seizing an opportunity to further a comparatively smaller aim. He summoned the young poet from Agra to Chitor and, when the imperial order reached Agra, the Makhdum-ul-Mulk, interpreting it in a sense hostile to Shaikh Mubarak and his sons, joyfully issued instructions for the arrest of Faizi on a charge of heresy, and sent him under escort to Chitor.

Faizi himself believed his doom to be sealed, and his wonderment was great when, on arrival at Chitor, he was cordially greeted by Aziz Khan Koka and conducted by him to the Emperor, who received him in private audience.

Akbar and his guest engaged in a long and earnest conversation and, when at length Faizi left the imperial presence, the foundations of a lifelong friendship had been laid between the young poet and his sovereign.

Conquest of Gujarat.

Great as was Akbar's desire for peace, he found himself within two years of his subjugation of the Rajputs compelled to lead an army into Gujarat, whose king Muzaffar Shah III. was a mere puppet in the hands of his minister Itimad Khan—originally a Hindu slave. The once great kingdom of Mahmud Bigara had, owing to the hatred of the powerful nobles of the Gujarat court for the Wazir and their never-ending attempts to overthrow his rule, become an abode of anarchy and a serious danger, not only to itself, but also to its neighbours.

In July 1572 Akbar assumed the personal leadership of a great army at Sikri, distributing the most important subordinate commands amongst the greatest figures of his court, Hindu and Moslem. The Hindu commanders included Bhagwan Das and Man Singh of Amber, Rai Singh of Bikanir and Bhoj Hara, son of the Prince of Bundi, whilst the Moslem element was represented by Aziz Khan Koka, Syed Ahmed Khan of Barha and the young

Abdurrahim, son of Bairam Khan, now grown to manhood, and on the threshold of a great career. From the very beginning the imperial forces encountered practically no resistance and, on November 20 of the same year, Akbar made his triumphant entry into Ahmedabad and his name was read as Emperor of Western India in the Khutba in all the mosques of the city.

Muzaffar Shah and his minister Itimad Khan both tendered their allegiance to Akbar, as did also practically all the leading Gujarati nobles.

Advancing to Cambay, the Emperor was acclaimed with enthusiasm by the large mercantile community, both native and foreign, whose prosperity had been so seriously affected by the recent years of anarchy.

Akbar soon realised that Itimad Khan's submission was merely a feint and that, in reality, he was plotting to overthrow the Moghul régime, and he unhesitatingly ordered his arrest. But a far more dangerous enemy threatened his authority shortly afterwards in the person of Mohammed Mirza, a scion of a Khorasan branch of the house of Timur, who occupied the fortress of Surat, whence he defied the Emperor.

On the night of December 23, 1572, news reached the Emperor of the murder of a loyal Gujarati noble, Rustam Khan Rumi, Imperial Governor of Broach, by another of the Khorasan princes, Ibrahim Hussein Mirza by name. Akbar's wonderful understanding of the Rajputs was almost undoubtedly due to the fact that a vein of reckless daring ran through his own character, and, roused to extreme anger by the murder of his faithful servant, he declared his intention to lead personally the very small force of 2000 men who were to mete out the punishment of the assassin.

Amongst those who, on hearing of the Emperor's intentions, immediately begged to be allowed to accompany their sovereign on his hazardous enterprise, were Bhagwan Das, Man Singh of Amber, Bhoj Hara of Bundi, Syed Mohammed of Barha and several other leading followers of both creeds.

So that their movements should be as inconspicuous as possible, Akbar led his diminutive army out in the dead of night, and, owing to his eagerness to advance and to the pervading darkness, the Emperor and his immediate escort became separated from the main body. When on the following evening he reached the banks of the river Mahi, he and his force, totalling only 100 men, found themselves

confronted on the opposite bank by Ibrahim Hussein Mirza at the head of a large army ready to meet their attack.

Undeterred by this to all appearance hopeless disparity in numbers, Akbar ordered an immediate advance, and when Man Singh begged permission to lead the vanguard of the army, he smilingly replied : " To-day we have no army to divide ; let us keep together and set our hearts to the combat ".[1]

To this the brave Kachwaha replied : " It is my duty, however, to push on to the front if it be but a few paces, to show my devotion to your Majesty ". Akbar granted his general's request and Man Singh, closely followed by the Emperor, rode into the stream. The Moghuls reached the opposite bank in safety only to find that Ibrahim Hussein Mirza had shifted his position to the end of a lane which led to one of the gates of the small town of Sarnal. This lane provided sufficient space only for three men to ride along it abreast and was besides bordered by hedges of prickly pear cactus. Holding up their swords to protect their heads, Akbar, Bhagwan Das and Man Singh rode forward side by side to the charge, the rest of their small band following them, and a desperate hand-to-hand fight ensued.

Bhupat Kachwaha, brother of Man Singh, was slain and both Man Singh and Bhoj Hara of Bundi were severely wounded ; there seemed no hope left for the others, when suddenly the sound of trumpets rent the air and the main force of Akbar's small army, lost in the darkness, arrived to their assistance. The enemy fled in wild confusion. Sarnal was occupied, and, after a siege extending over two months, Surat capitulated.

Having appointed Aziz Khan Koka Viceroy of Gujarat, Akbar returned to Sikri, which had been his chief place of residence ever since the birth of Prince Salim. He was, however, not destined to remain there for more than a very brief space, for almost immediately upon his arrival a messenger brought tidings of a fresh rebellion in Gujarat by Mohammed Hussein Mirza, assisted by a local nobleman named Ikhtiyar-ul-Mulk.

On August 23, 1573, the Emperor once more set out for Gujarat at the head of a diminutive force of 2000 men. So swift was his advance that the 600 miles between Sikri and Ahmedabad were covered within the astoundingly short period of eleven days, and Akbar reached the gates of the capital of Gujarat on September 3. The rebels, who were in

[1] Chalmers, *Akbarnamah*, vol. ii.

complete ignorance of the departure of the punitive expedition from Sikri, had made no preparations for defence and the Moghuls, on reaching the suburbs of Ahmedabad, found no enemy force to bar their farther progress.

On this occasion Akbar once more gave such remarkable proof of his chivalrous spirit as to recall to his Rajput allies the finest characteristics of their national hero, Prithvi Raj.

Declaring it to be an unworthy act to attack a foe unawares, he gave orders to his trumpeters to sound the alarm, which naturally resulted in the entire rebel army pouring out of the city gates and forming up to meet the threatened assault. Abdurrahim, the son of Bairam Khan, who on this occasion also had formed part of the Emperor's escort, was now summoned by Akbar and the command of the centre of the small imperial army was bestowed upon him as a special honour that he might have an opportunity of giving proof of the great military qualities which had so distinguished his father. The insurgents, 20,000 strong, had taken up their position on the left bank of the river Sabharmati and, in order to come into contact with them, the Emperor and his troops rode into the stream. A fierce battle followed, and at one moment Akbar's position seemed hopeless, his horse being wounded and only two of his troopers being at his side, but eventually he regained touch with the remainder of his army, and in the end his brilliant leadership and the devotion which he inspired in all who served him triumphed over the enemy and won decisive victory for him and his intrepid little army. The rebels scattered in wild confusion and fled; Mohammed Hussein Mirza was taken prisoner, and, for the second time within a few months, Akbar entered Ahmedabad a conqueror.

He immediately summoned Abdurrahim and, in recognition of the brilliant way in which he had fulfilled his task, nominated him Viceroy of Gujarat; henceforth the son of Bairam Khan rose steadily to power and was eventually elevated to the rank of Khan Khanan and invested with all the honours formerly held by his father.

The Raja Todar Mal was appointed by the Emperor as assistant administrator to the young viceroy, and on him devolved the onerous task of restoring the finances of the province from the chaos brought about by the unstable conditions of the preceding years.

Foundation of Fathpur Sikri.

Akbar re-entered Sikri on October 5 and gave orders that the city should, in commemoration of the conquest of

Gujarat, henceforth be named Fathabad or Fathpur Sikri, "The City of Victory".

Up to the present Akbar, when at Sikri, had always dwelt as a guest in the house of Shaikh Salim Chisti. Henceforth he decreed that Fathpur Sikri should be the seat of government of the empire. A magnificent palace was built as the imperial residence, all the nobles were given imposing mansions to live in, and lastly the great mosque with its Gate of Victory was erected, which still counts as one of the architectural glories of India.

Events in Bengal.

Akbar's next move was to Bengal, but in order fully to understand the reasons which made his presence there necessary we must go back to the year 1564.

After the death of Sher Shah Sur an Afghan nobleman of the court named Sulaiman Kararani, who had held the governorship of Bengal and Bihar under this sovereign and who had continued to do so during the changes which followed upon his demise, determined to assume the royal title and was publicly enthroned in Gaur. He was a man of great wisdom and understanding, and, though fully aware of Akbar's wonderful rise to fame, followed the stages of his career with deepest interest untinged by apprehension for the future. Two years after Sulaiman had assumed the royal title, he accepted the Emperor's suzerainty by agreement with the Moghul Government.

His reign terminated with his death in 1572 and he was succeeded by his eldest son, Bayazid, who was, however, assassinated a few months later in a palace revolution, and his younger brother Daud placed on the throne in his stead. This ruler is best described in the blunt words of a contemporary historian as "a dissolute scamp who knew nothing of the business of governing".[1]

In the treaty which had been concluded between Akbar and Sulaiman Kararani it had been agreed that the Khutba should be read in all the mosques of Bengal and Bihar in the name of the Moghul Emperor, and his titles engraved on the coinage of the kingdom. Daud, whose weakness was equalled only by his arrogance, immediately altered this prudent policy by the issue of a new coinage bearing his own titles only, and by the promulgation of a decree commanding his name alone to be read in the Khutba as King of Bengal and Bihar.

At first the Emperor attached no importance to the attitude of the Bengal monarch, but when Daud followed up

[1] *Nizam-ud-Din Ahmed, Tabakat-i-Akbari*, Elliot, vol. v. p. 373.

these proceedings by ordering his troops to attack the Moghul frontier fort of Zamania, he realised that his hostility could no longer be ignored and sent instructions to Munim Khan, the imperial Viceroy at Jaunpur, to invade Bengal.

The Emperor's choice of Munim as commander of the punitive expedition was probably due to the fact that Jaunpur was the only possible base for operations against the Kararani kingdom ; in all other respects this selection was an unfortunate one, for although in his youth, when he had succeeded Bairam Khan as Khan Khanan, he had been an able and distinguished soldier, he was at this period bordering upon his eightieth year and had lost much of his physical and mental vigour. In addition to this the very close friendship existing between him and Lodi Khan, the chief minister of the kingdom and the prime mover in the revolution which had placed Daud upon the throne, greatly influenced his attitude towards Bengal.

He obeyed Akbar's command and immediately gathered together all available troops at his disposal as Viceroy and placing himself at their head invaded Bihar. Daud's formidable army, of which the infantry alone numbered 160,000 men, could not stay Munim Khan's advance, which continued almost to the gates of Patna, but instead of following up his advantage the Moghul commander then began to show signs of vacillation and, after a few quite inconclusive skirmishes with the Afghan troops, concluded peace with Daud, based solely on a vague promise by the King of Bengal to renew his allegiance to the imperial throne.

Daud owed this treaty, which inflicted no penalties whatever upon him, mainly to the influence of his prime minister Lodi Khan with the Moghul commander ; but, far from showing himself grateful, the mean-spirited and unscrupulous monarch, soon after the signatures had been appended, had the faithful Wazir brutally murdered.

Meanwhile Akbar had received intelligence of the peace concluded by his viceroy and had been greatly displeased by the terms. True to the principles of Indian statecraft never to show generosity towards an aggressor before he had been brought to book, and fully alive to the fact that Daud would interpret generosity as a proof of weakness on his part, Akbar wrote to Munim Khan reprimanding him for being a party to the treaty, which he refused to recognise ; further, he sent Raja Todar Mal, whom he knew to be both energetic and resourceful, to assume practical command of the imperial forces in Bengal.

Having taken these steps, Akbar still felt uneasy concerning the position in Eastern India, and finally, on June 15, 1574, he left Fathpur Sikri and proceeded to Bengal at the head of considerable reinforcements and attended by many of the highest dignitaries of the empire, including Bhagwan Das, Man Singh of Amber and the former Brahmin minstrel Mahesh Das, who was now raised to nobility with the title of Raja Birbal and held as his fief the important fortress of Kalanjar in Bundelkhand.

Akbar advances on Patna. Conquest of Bihar.

The Emperor and his suite journeyed by water down the Ganges, but the army had instructions to proceed by land, and this twofold advance had been so cleverly planned and was so brilliantly executed that, notwithstanding the fact that the monsoon was at its height, Akbar and his troops arrived at Patna simultaneously on August 3.

The Emperor found the city closely besieged by the troops of Munim Khan and Todar Mal and, after consultation with his generals, gave orders for an immediate assault on the town of Hajipur, situated on the opposite bank of the Ganges, whence the garrison and populace of Patna drew the greater part of their supplies.

A picked body of Moghul soldiers was detailed by the Emperor to carry out the attack, and these performed the magnificent feat of fording the Ganges when in full flood. Hajipur was taken by storm after a brave defence by the garrison, the result of this victory being far greater than even Akbar had dared to anticipate, for Daud, though protected by the strong walls of Patna and still with a large army under his command, suddenly lost confidence and fled from the city on that same night, his troops, in their endeavours to protect his flight, suffering severely from the Moghul attacks.

On the following day, August 4, Akbar entered the ancient capital of Chandragupta Maurya, Bindusara and Asoka, as conqueror and the land of Magadha passed under his rule.

To Akbar, however, the lust for conquest was a secondary consideration ; in waging war his great desire was to bring it to a conclusion as soon as possible and to turn his mind to the gentler tasks of civil administration and religious and social reforms.

Having appointed Munim Khan Governor of Bihar, with Todar Mal as his second in command, he returned to Fathpur Sikri, and it was at this point in his career that an incident occurred which, though apparently insignificant,

was destined to be of far greater importance to Akbar and his empire than the conquest of Patna.

Meeting of the Emperor with Abul Fazl.

This incident was the introduction to the Emperor of his younger brother Abul Fazl by the poet Faizi.

Highly educated, endowed with a brilliant intellect, great power of concentration and wonderful industry, Abul Fazl was one of the most remarkable men of his age. Both brothers were gifted poets and, by religion, Shiah Musulmans, whose belief had much in it of the mystic philosophy of the Sufis.

Abul Fazl, however, felt that even the combination of Shiah Islam and Sufism were insufficient to satisfy the cravings of his soul. From the time of his earliest youth he loved nothing better than to study the religions and customs of other peoples. To quote his own words : " My heart felt itself drawn to the sages of Mongolia and to the hermits on Lebanon : I longed for interviews with the Lamas of Tibet and with the Padris of Portugal ; I would gladly sit with the priests of the Parsees and the learned of the Zend-Avesta ".[1]

In a measure as he studied other creeds the conviction forced itself upon Abul Fazl's broad and tolerant mind that there was good to be gained and much to be learnt from each, and he began to dream of a faith which should embody all that was noblest in every religion and thus bring peace and unity where, at present, there was bitter feeling and sectarian strife. It is easy to understand the rapidity with which a man of such ideals gained influence with a sovereign of the type of Akbar, but Abul Fazl never aspired to be the power behind the throne and never attained to that position in the sense in which it is usually applied in East and West.

In describing the relations between the Emperor and Abul Fazl, it is best to call each the complement of the other, for what was lacking in the one seemed to be supplied by the other.

Akbar, imbued with the thirst for knowledge, had, owing to his adventurous and chequered boyhood, never been taught to read and write and yet possessed a far greater knowledge of men, a far more correct grasp of their motives than the poet, man of letters and expert caligraphist. Abul Fazl, his dreams of a spiritual revolution becoming ever more vivid but without the means to bring it about, suddenly found his ideals shared by one of the most powerful monarchs of the age, and though he never, as some European writers have stated, filled the post of prime minister of the empire,

[1] Blochmann, *Ain-i-Akbari*, p. xii.

he became, almost from the moment of his presentation to him, his sovereign's closest and most constant friend, ever ready to sympathise with his hopes, his joys and his fears.

Development of Akbar's religious policy.

One of the earliest results of the influence of this highly educated man at the court was a royal decree commanding the erection of an Ibadat Khana or House of Argument at Fathpur Sikri and, when this hall had been completed, the Emperor inaugurated discussions on the Thursday evenings of every week, when the representatives of the various Moslem sects were invited to discourse upon the distinctive features of their respective doctrines.

The Emperor, invariably accompanied by Abul Fazl, presided over these debates, and there is no doubt that, though instituted to satisfy his craving for enlightenment on all religious points, they also, by their very shortcomings, guided his mind very much farther along the path of spiritual evolution.

These Thursday evening discussions were, from the first, scenes of heated argument between the debaters in spite of the fact that all were members of the same faith, and in the course of time these arguments deteriorated into personal abuse amongst the participants.

Akbar and Abul Fazl always preserved their serenity, but by degrees the Emperor grew weary of the bigotry and narrowness of the disputing Ulema, and doubts arose in his mind as to whether any one faith could embody the whole truth ; and with these doubts came the desire to seek beyond the confines of Islam amongst the other great religions of the empire for the ideal belief which he yearned so intensely to find.

When engaged upon the conquest of Gujarat in 1573, Akbar had encamped in the neighbourhood of the town of Nausari, which was then, as it still is to-day, the residence of the Dasturs or spiritual heads of the Zoroastrian faith in India. On this occasion the Emperor had become acquainted with Dastur Meherji Rana, one of the most eminent of the Parsee high priests, and even in the midst of his arduous campaign he had taken every opportunity to seek the society of the Dastur and to get him to explain to his eager mind the history and tenets of his religion.

The basis of the Zoroastrian religion, which represents the eternal struggle between the forces of good and evil, "Ahuramazda and Ahriman", made a singularly strong appeal to the Emperor. The thrilling story of the overthrow of the mighty Sassanian Empire of Persia by the

Khalif Omar, the picture of the flight of the few thousand men and women who still clung to the old faith, and who, with their world falling to ruins, throughout the terrible trek from Persepolis to distant Gujarat, kept the sacred fire, the symbol of their God, alight, roused the monarch's deepest sympathy, because it confirmed him in his desire to institute a policy of universal religious toleration.

The worship of fire as the symbol of deity was neither new nor repugnant to Akbar ; his earliest Hindu adherent, the Brahmin Raja Birbal, was a devotee of Surya the Sun God, and the Emperor had for many years, in order to show respect for the observances of his Rajputni consorts, joined them in the ceremony of the *Hom*, or Fire Sacrifice, to the Vedic deity Agni.

When, therefore, his patience over the constant manifestations of intolerance by the Moslem Ulema became exhausted, and he recognised the futility of continuing to preside at debates originally instituted to bring about a more broad-minded attitude, he turned towards the faith of Zoroaster, and summoned Dastur Meherji Rana to his court.

The Dastur made Akbar acquainted with the rites and ceremonies of the Parsees, and taught him the beautiful *Gathas* or hymns of the Zend-Avesta, believed to have been composed by Zoroaster himself. Finally the Emperor gave orders that within the precincts of the imperial harem a Parsee fire temple should be erected, to which Abul Fazl was appointed custodian, the solemn duty devolving upon him never to allow the sacred flame to be extinguished.

Akbar was under no illusion as to the hostile spirit in which this action on his part would be received, not only by the Musulman Ulema, but also by the bulk of the Moslem nobles of his court.

For the moment the Ulema were too powerful to be dealt with, and the Emperor decided, as a primary move, to restrict the influence of the nobles, and to inspire confidence in the peasantry, the real backbone of the country, by showing himself to them in the light of a protector of all their interests. Hitherto the civil administration of the Moghul empire still remained much the same as it had been in the days of Ala-ud-Din Khilji and Sher Shah Sur, which meant that practically the entire territory under the direct government of the Emperor was parcelled out into *jagirs* or fiefs, each held by the great nobles of the court.

Akbar remodels the civil government.

The taxes collected within each *jagir* were not paid into the imperial treasury, but were the property of the *Jagirdar*

(fief holder), and part of them he was expected to employ in raising a body of troops, large or small according to the size of the *jagir*, for the Emperor's service. This system very naturally invested each *Jagirdar* with sufficient power, if he so desired, to become virtually a king within his own domain, and to make use of the troops he had raised to defy the central government.

Akbar revolutionised this system, and issued a decree by which the *jagirs* were resumed by the government, and converted into *khalisa* or crown domains.

The *jagirs* were now given the name of "*mansabs*" or places, and a noble or official of the court was appointed over each who bore the title of "*mansabdar*" or place-holder, which combined civil and military rank, without, however, in any sense giving him the right to appropriate the *mansabs*, the *Mansabdar* being merely a court functionary who was paid a fixed salary by the government for managing the territory placed under his control, in the name of his imperial master.

In most cases the rank of the *Mansabdar* decided the number of troops which he was called upon to supply for the imperial army and ranged from the highest, the *Dah Hazari* or Commander of 10,000, to those who had only about 500 men under their command. The titles of nobility borne by the *Mansabdar* were never hereditary, and the revenues of the *mansabs*, after deduction of the portion required for the salaries of the troops, had to be paid by the *Mansabdar* into the imperial treasury.

Raja Todar Mal was appointed to the important office of *Diwan* or Minister of Finance, and was entrusted with the complete reorganisation of the system of land assessment. By the raising of Todar Mal to such high office, Akbar gave to his Hindu subjects the most definite and convincing proof that sectarian intolerance was a closed book to him, and that personal qualifications, whether in the case of Hindu or Moslem, was henceforth the determining factor in the distribution of the great Government posts.

Todar Mal, brilliant and dauntless as a military leader and equally capable in matters of finance, was an orthodox Hindu of the most zealous type, and absolutely rigid in his observance of all the rites and ceremonies of his faith and of the rules of caste.

Land settlement of Todar Mal.

He fully justified his sovereign's trust. Within the course of the following few years practically the entire agricultural land throughout the empire was systematically surveyed,

the taxes in each area assessed according to its capacity to pay, and these taxes paid, in some cases in cash, and in others in kind, according to the fruitfulness of the soil and the nature of the crops cultivated.

The effect of these reforms upon the material prosperity of India was remarkable, and there can be no greater proof of this than the fact that the system of land settlement and assessment followed in British India to-day is based very largely upon that instituted by Todar Mal, Akbar's great Hindu minister.

At the very outset of his appointment as Diwan, Todar Mal was temporarily obliged to turn his attention from the difficult though peaceful problems upon which he was engaged, in order to cope with a fresh outbreak of disorder in Bengal.

Conquest of Bengal.

Following upon the departure of Akbar after the victory of Patna, desultory fighting had taken place between the imperial forces under the commander-in-chief, Munim Khan, and those of Daud Kararani, culminating on March 3, 1575, in the hard-fought battle of Tukaroi, in which the Moghuls gained a decisive victory, thus placing the whole of Bengal and Bihar under Akbar's sceptre.

At that time Todar Mal was still Munim Khan's second-in-command, and in spite of his renewed opposition, Munim Khan concluded a second treaty of peace with Daud, which left the Afghan prince in possession of the province of Orissa. The result was easy to foresee ; within a year, Daud, having raised a fresh army, reinvaded Bengal.

Despite the protests of all his officers, especially of Muzaffar Khan Turbati, his principal subordinate, Governor of Hajipur and Warden of the Bihar Marches, who pointed out to him the extreme unhealthiness of the climate, the Khan Khanan decided to transfer his headquarters from Tanda, the former capital of the Kararani kings, to Gaur, the seat of the first Mohammedan government of Bengal. A terrible outbreak of some pestilence followed upon this move, in which Munim Khan and thousands of Moghuls perished.

Akbar now transferred the Viceroy of the Punjab, Khan Jehan, a very able man, to the same post in Bengal, and temporarily detached Todar Mal from his home duties, and sent him to act as Khan Jehan's assistant.

The Emperor meanwhile was taking steps personally to visit Bengal, and had actually started, when a messenger galloped into the village at which he was making a short

halt, with the tidings that a crushing defeat had been inflicted upon the enemy. On his saddle bow he carried the head of Daud Kararani, a gruesome proof of the Moghul victory.

The actual battle had been fought at Raj Mahal on July 12, 1576, and Daud had been captured.

It was only after lengthy consultation with his officers and with great reluctance on his own part that Khan Jehan gave the order for the Bengal monarch's execution. Though in itself a barbarous proceeding, Daud had on so many occasions proved his unworthiness and inability to keep faith that his death probably saved much unnecessary bloodshed in the future.

Bengal, Bihar and Orissa were now united in one viceroyalty under the rule of Khan Jehan, and Akbar again felt free to return to Fathpur Sikri and to continue his arduous tasks of civil government and religious reform at home.

The Emperor had overcome a great number of difficulties, and, especially with regard to the Rajput princes, his policy of tolerance for their spiritual ideals had borne excellent fruit.

The Kachwahas of Amber were closely bound to the imperial throne not only by the fact that the heir apparent, Prince Salim, was the son of a Kachwaha princess, but also because the young prince had recently been betrothed to his cousin Man Bai, the adopted sister of Man Singh.

At the Hindu sacred city of Benares, Surjan Hara of Bundi, head of the illustrious Chauhan clan, ruled as the Musulman Emperor's Viceroy, and, most remarkable of all, in Marwar Raja Udai Singh, the son of Babur's bitter enemy, Mal Deo, held the desert kingdom as a feudatory of Babur's grandson.

Akbar's second campaign in Mewar.

One Rajput kingdom, which though defeated had not been wholly conquered, still sullenly refused to be incorporated in the imperial system—this was the Sesodia state of Mewar.

Heredity sometimes belies the very meaning for which it stands, and it was so in the case of Pertab Singh, the second son of the cowardly monarch Udai Singh, who succeeded to the nominal dignity of Maharana of Mewar in 1576, a year after his father's death. Pertab Singh, who may perhaps be looked upon as the most heroic figure in the long and glorious history of the Sesodia kingdom, succeeded to the throne, in the words of Tod,[1] " without a capital and with-

[1] Tod's *Rajasthan*, vol. i. chap. x. p. 264.

out resources ", for Chitor was in the hands of the Moghuls, and yet, in spite of all, he determined to pit his weakness against Akbar's strength and to attempt to regain what his father had lost.

Man Singh of Amber, who fully realised the great benefit which their acknowledgement of the suzerainty of Akbar had brought to the Rajput states, and who was also a Rajput patriot in the best sense of the word, offered his services to Akbar as intermediary when Pertab Singh succeeded to the throne of Mewar, and begged to be allowed to use all his endeavours to bring about a reconciliation between the house of Bappa Rawal and that of Timur.

Man Singh, however, had underestimated the spirit which made it seem inconceivable to the Sesodia prince that a Rajput, who like himself claimed descent from Rama, should not only bow the knee to the Moghul but should be willing to bestow the hand of his kinswoman upon a prince of the imperial house. Pertab Singh was of opinion that in agreeing to such a marriage the Kachwahas had brought dishonour upon their house and had sunk to the level of outcasts in the Hindu social system, and under the circumstances he would no more consent to break bread with the great Prince of Amber than to fraternise with the meanest Sudra.

Udai Singh after the fall of Chitor had built a small palace in the vicinity of Nagda, the scene of his ancestor Bappa's romance, which he named Udaipur, and he intended it to be the centre round which the new capital of Mewar was to grow up.

It was to this palace that Man Singh repaired on what he hoped would be an errand of reconciliation. On his arrival he felt that all was not as it should be, for instead of being greeted by the Maharana himself, he was received only by his eldest son, Prince Amar Singh, and a few of the chief vassals of Mewar, who offered him refreshment after his journey.

His suspicions aroused, the Prince of Amber asked to see the Maharana, but received the reply that his son would do the honours as Pertab Singh was prostrated by a headache. " Tell the Rana I can divine the cause of his headache, but the error is irremediable, and if he refuses to put a plate (Khansa) before me, who will ? " [1] was Man Singh's answer.

All further efforts to evade the point at issue being now of no avail, Prince Amar Singh replied that his father

[1] Tod's *Rajasthan*, vol. i. chap. xi. pp. 268-9.

"could not eat with a Rajput who gave his sister to a Toork and who probably ate with him".

Burning with indignation at this affront, the Kachwaha mounted his horse, and was about to depart when the Maharana made his appearance. Turning in his saddle, the Prince of Amber exclaimed in passionate accents: "It was for the preservation of your honour that we sacrificed our own, and gave our sisters and our daughters to the Toork; but abide in peril if such be your resolve, for this country shall not hold you; if I do not humble your pride my name is not Man".[1]

Having fully realised how completely he had failed in his self-imposed mission, Man Singh rode back to Fathpur Sikri and informed Akbar that Pertab was a very different man from his faint-hearted father, and that in the new Maharana of Mewar he possessed a formidable enemy whom it was wise to crush, before he became more powerful still.

Roused to intense anger by the insult to himself and indirectly to his Rajputni consorts by Pertab, and seeing a threat to his policy of Hindu-Musulman unity in his attitude, Akbar placed an army of considerable strength under the command of Man Singh and entrusted him with the task of finally humbling the Sesodia in the dust. This army was recruited from Marwar, Bikanir, Bundi and all the Rajput states which had acknowledged the suzerainty of the Emperor, and in calling upon these contingents to serve under Man Singh's banner, Akbar once more proved his astuteness and statesmanship. He wished to show not only that he trusted them but also that the campaign against Mewar was in no sense undertaken from religious motives.

Battle of Haldighat.

Pertab awaited the Moghul attack at the Pass of Haldighat situated in the Aravallis, some sixteen miles from Udaipur.

The decisive battle took place in June 1576 and ranks, chiefly owing to the inequality in numbers, as one of the most heroic struggles in the long and stormy history of Mewar.

The feudatory chiefs of the kingdom, severely handicapped by the fact that the estates from which they drew the resources necessary for the raising of troops, were largely in the hands of their foes, were unable, though they rallied faithfully as ever to the Maharana's banner, to save him from defeat.

[1] Tod's *Rajasthan*, vol. i. chap. xi. pp. 268-9.

They were opposed by the strength of a great empire whose army consisted largely of men of their own race, and, to add to their difficulties, Man Singh actually counted amongst his followers the Maharana's younger brother Sakta, for many years an exile from Mewar and high up in the councils of the Prince of Amber, who harboured dreams of eventually ascending the throne of the Sesodia kingdom as vassal of Akbar.

Totally indifferent to his personal danger and with all the recklessness of his race, Pertab directed the battle in full state as though engaged in the peaceful holding of a durbar.

The royal umbrella held above his head was naturally an excellent target for the Moghul guns, and Bida of Sadri, a feudatory chief belonging to the Jhala clan of Rajputs, after vainly imploring the Maharana to lower it, resorted, in order to save the Maharana's life, to one of those splendid acts of devotion with which the annals of Rajputana, and especially those of Mewar, abound. Wrenching the umbrella of sovereignty from its bearer, he raised it over his own head and galloped to another part of the field followed by his vassals. The Moghuls, believing the Maharana to have shifted his position, instantly rained their bullets in the direction taken by Bida of Sadri, who, together with all his vassals, paid the supreme sacrifice.

His heroism had, however, not been in vain, for this brave deed brought lasting glory to the house of Sadri[1] and saved the life of Pertab for ultimate victory.

For the time being the Maharana and his army had suffered severely. Of the 22,000 Rajputs who had fought for him only 8000 survived the battle, and Pertab himself, though severely wounded, fled, mounted upon his favourite horse Chaitak, towards the hills. Three enemy chieftains pursued him on his flight, two of them Moslems, the third his own brother Sakta, who had previously joined the Moghuls with the object of overthrowing Pertab.

Now when the coveted prize seemed within Sakta's grasp, by a strange revulsion of feeling, all the inborn loyalty of the Rajput for the head of his clan and race reasserted itself, and perhaps also the warrior's heart was stirred by memories of a common childhood, when hatred, fostered by ambition, had been unknown.

Be this as it may, Sakta, suddenly couching his lance,

[1] In recognition of this heroic act the descendants of Bida of Sadri rank as first among the nobles of Mewar, with the privilege of holding the umbrella of state over the head of the sovereign.

charged full at the two Moslem nobles who accompanied him. Completely taken by surprise and therefore unable to put up any defence, both chiefs fell to the ground mortally wounded, and Sakta, spurring his horse to renewed effort, rode after his brother.

The Maharana's faithful charger Chaitak, who like his master had been wounded in the battle, was almost in the last stages of exhaustion, and even the intrepid Pertab was giving up hope when a voice was heard calling, "Ho nila ghora ra aswar!",[1] "Ho, rider of the blue horse". Turning his head, Pertab beheld his brother, now alone in his pursuit. At this moment the Maharana's horse sank dead under him, and Pertab was preparing to make a last desperate effort to save his own life when Sakta jumped from his own steed and offered his brother the hilt of his sword in token of allegiance.

A few hurried words of explanation followed, after which Sakta insisted upon his brother taking his charger Ankaro and riding towards the fastnesses of the Aravalli, whilst he himself returned to the spot where the slain Moslem nobles lay, and, mounting one of their horses, rode back to the Moghul camp.

Entering the presence of Man Singh, he strove to explain his unexpected return without his companions by saying that Pertab had offered such desperate resistance that not only had the two Moslems been slain, but that the Maharana had succeeded in robbing him of his horse and continuing his flight to a place of refuge. The Prince of Amber, however, was not duped, and demanded bluntly that he should speak the truth.

Whereupon, looking the Kachwaha fearlessly in the face, Sakta replied: "The burden of a kingdom is on my brother's shoulders, nor could I witness his danger without defending him".[2]

With true Rajput chivalry Man Singh rose to the occasion, and instead of taking advantage of the young Sesodia's unprotected position, granted him and his followers permission to depart though he knew full well that he was weakening himself by so doing; and Sakta with his retainers rode forth to join his brother.[3]

[1] Tod's *Rajasthan*, vol. i. chap. xi. pp. 270-71.

[2] Tod's *Rajasthan*, vol. i. chap. xi. p. 271.

[3] Sakta lived to become the founder of the Saktawat branch of the Sesodia clan, and his descendant, the Maharaj of Bhindar, ranks with the Rawat of Salumbar and the Raj of Sadri as one of the three greatest feudatories of Mewar.

In spite of this dramatic incident, Akbar for the moment had triumphed, for the forces of Man Singh occupied Udaipur and the great fortress of Kumbhalmir, whilst his enemy, defeated though still stout-hearted, sought refuge with the wild Bhils of the mountains who so frequently had protected the line of Bappa Rawal in its hour of danger.

Events at Fathpur Sikri. Akbar's conflict with the Ulema.

Akbar had tested the loyalty of his Rajput feudatories and had not found them wanting ; his difficulties now came from the Musulman element at his court, with whom his relations were becoming hourly more and more strained. The bigoted orthodoxy of Mahmud of Ghazni still remained the ideal faith to the Sunni Ulema of Fathpur Sikri, just as Mahmud of Ghazni himself lived in their memories as the ideal Mohammedan sovereign ; and Akbar's policy of universal religious toleration, coupled with his own very broad-minded beliefs, appeared to them in the light of utter sacrilege and the violation of the teachings of the Prophet. The disaffected Moslem nobles—and there existed a very considerable number—chafed under the rule of the Emperor and supported the Sunni clerics, hoping to gain strength for themselves, and possibly to see a return of the days when each of them had been a petty sovereign in his own domain.

The Emperor was under no illusion as to the grave threat which this attitude of hostility on the part of the Moslem clergy constituted towards his policy of enlightenment.

The Islamic law invested the Ulema with power to issue a *fetva* or religious decree which declared the Emperor's policy of freedom of conscience to be contrary to the doctrines of the Koran, and, by so doing, absolved every devout Moslem from obedience to the sovereign.

A lesser man would have sought to compromise, but Akbar determined on the only course which commended itself to him, that of striking a vital blow at the root of the danger by proclaiming himself the Head of the Mohammedan Church, a measure which would place him above even the Ulema.

Akbar proclaims himself head of the Mohammedan Church in India.

Towards the end of the year 1579, the Emperor announced his intention of himself reading the Khutba from the pulpit at the Friday prayers of the principal mosque of the city instead of allowing the *Imam* of the mosque to perform that duty, and, on the first Friday of the fifth month of the Mohammedan year, he ascended the *mimbar* (pulpit) of the Great Mosque for the first time.

In the presence of a vast congregation which included all

the Moslems of the court, the Makhdum-ul-Mulk and all the leading Ulema, the Emperor, in clear tones, read the Khutba especially composed for the occasion by the poet Faizi.

> The Lord has given me the Empire,
> And a wise heart and a strong arm.
> He has guided me in righteousness and justice
> And has removed from my thoughts everything but justice.
> His praise surpasses man's understanding.
> Great is His power, Allahu Akbar.[1]

To the members of the Ulema the words of this Khutba could admit of only one interpretation, and this was that the Emperor, considering himself endowed by the Almighty with superior attributes of righteousness and justice, felt entitled to claim the position of a "Sultan-i-Adil" or Just Ruler, whose spiritual decrees would, by Mohammedan law, take precedence of any put forward by even the most learned of the Ulema.

During the following three months a cleverly conceived and very active propaganda in favour of the Emperor's claims was carried on at the imperial court, in which the moving spirits were Shaikh Mubarak and his sons, and finally, in September 1579, the Shaikh drafted a document which was circulated for signature amongst all the members of the Ulema, formally proclaiming Akbar a Sultan-i-Adil, and thus the supreme expounder of Musulman law in Hindustan.

With fury in their hearts, but for the moment powerless to resist, the Makhdum-ul-Mulk and his colleages affixed their seals to the document; the Shaikh Mubarak, in putting his own, added to its importance by writing a few words under it to the effect that his signature had been most gladly given.

Akbar was now Pope as well as King, and began to make more rapid strides upon his self-set path towards spiritual revolution. Henceforth the debates in the Ibadat Khana were, by imperial command, open to all the great faiths of the empire; and Brahmin Pandit, Parsee Mobed and Jain Acharya were given the same opportunities as the Musulman Ulema to expound the doctrines of their respective creeds.

Broadening of Akbar's religious policy.

Akbar was always present at these debates and listened with deepest interest to the interpretation of all the

[1] Blochmann, *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. i. p. 185.

First Jesuit mission.

scriptures, but his longing for spiritual light was not satisfied by the religions of his own empire; his yearning was for some knowledge of another of the great faiths of mankind, Christianity, as illustrated by the Roman Catholic Church. Almost simultaneously with his assumption of the spiritual sovereignty over India, Akbar sent an envoy to Goa, the capital of Portuguese India, bearing letters from him to the Portuguese Viceroy, Dom Diogo de Menezes, to the Archbishop of Goa and to the local Provincial of the Society of Jesus, in which he requested the favour of the despatch of a Jesuit mission to his court. He promised to receive its members with every possible honour and pledged his own good faith for their safety. He begged that the missionaries be allowed to bring with them the books of law, and above all the Gospels, and added, "because I truly and earnestly desire to understand their perfection".[1]

At this period Portugal and Spain were united under the sceptre of Philip II., whose desire to see Catholicism spread all over the world was even in excess of his ambition to extend the territories of Spain.

His viceroy in India was naturally most anxious to bring about the conversion to Christianity of one of the greatest monarchs of the Orient, and the terms of Akbar's letter justified him in hoping that such a conversion could be achieved.

Don Diogo therefore acceded to the Emperor's request and despatched a mission of three Jesuit Fathers, very carefully selected by the Jesuit Provincial of Goa, to the court of Fathpur Sikri. The head of the mission, Father Ridolfo Aquaviva, a younger son of the Duke of Atri, one of the leading noblemen of the kingdom of Naples, had arrived in Portuguese India one year previously. Still under the age of thirty, Aquaviva combined in his personality the unworldliness of the ascetic, the zeal of the missionary and the erudition of the scholar.

Within a few months of landing at Goa, he had obtained complete mastery over the local Konkani dialect and of the Persian language, while the conversion to Christianity of a princess of the royal Adil Shahi house of Bijapur gave proof of his powers as a missionary.

The second member of the mission, Father Antonio Monserrate, was a Spaniard by birth and hailed from Catalonia. Equally prominent as a scholar both in history and geography, he was in other respects essentially an ardent

[1] Vincent Smith, *Akbar the Great Mogul*, chap. vi. p. 169.

soldier of the Church, whose zeal to proselytise sometimes led him to language startling in its violence.

The choice of the third missionary had fallen upon a Persian convert from Islam, who, on being baptized, had received the name of Francisco Enriquez, and who, by virtue of his extraction and knowledge of the customs and etiquette of an Oriental court, was well qualified to assist his European colleagues.

The mission reached Fathpur Sikri on February 28, 1580, and were instantly, by the Emperor's orders, conducted to his apartments.

Akbar, to pay full honour to his guests, had donned the velvet and ruff of a Spanish cavalier for the occasion, and immediately entered into conversation with them through the medium of Domenico Perez, his Portuguese interpreter, the subject of discussion being mainly those religious topics in which his soul delighted.

It was not until the early hours of the following morning that the Emperor, becoming aware of the weariness of his guests, allowed them to retire to the quarters in readiness for their reception.

On March 3 the mission was received in ceremonial audience by Akbar, who was on that occasion presented by Aquaviva with a magnificent illuminated copy of the Bible, originally the property of Philip of Spain.

From that moment the Fathers became the Emperor's constant companions, and a building within the precincts of the palace was solemnly consecrated as a Roman Catholic Chapel, and its walls adorned with images of Christ and the Virgin Mary painted by the palace artists.

The Emperor frequently attended Mass accompanied by one officer only, and on these occasions could be seen to follow the service with every mark of reverence. Akbar's insatiable thirst for knowledge and his broad-minded views brought him to the conclusion that it was an indispensable part of the education of a prince to include in his studies the religions and customs of other nations.

For this purpose he requested Father Monserrate to give his second son, Prince Murad, instruction in the Roman Catholic faith and the Portuguese language. Permission was given to the Fathers to walk in public procession through the streets of Fathpur Sikri exposing the symbols of their creed and to undertake missionary work in the city; and the effect of these revolutionising changes upon the orthodox Musulman community, both at the court and throughout the

empire, can easily be imagined. The spirit of disloyalty which had been steadily gaining ground developed into a formidable conspiracy which aimed at no less a thing than the overthrow of the Emperor, and the substitution upon the throne of his half-brother, Mirza Mohammed Hakim, who was ruling Kabul as Akbar's vassal. The fact that Mohammed Hakim was known to be weak and cowardly, an habitual drunkard, and in short lacking every quality necessary in a ruler, was not taken into consideration by the conspirators, who saw in him only the orthodox Mohammedan who would bring them back to the old order of things. The Emperor at the time was so engrossed with the study of this new theology with his Christian guests that he seemed blissfully ignorant of the network of treachery which was being woven around him, and the tentacles of which reached from Bengal to Kabul.

Musulman revolt in Hindustan and Kabul.

The principal leader of the plot in Fathpur Sikri was one of the Emperor's ministers, Khwaja Shah Mansur, a Persian upon whom Akbar had showered benefits and whom he had raised from the humble position of a clerk to be Todar Mal's assistant in the Finance Department. The signal for the outbreak of the storm was given in January 1580 by Mullah Mohammed Yazdi, Kazi of Jaunpur, who issued a *fetva* declaring the religious policy of the Emperor to be a direct violation of the teachings of the Prophet and a justification for all true Moslems to raise the flag of revolt against him.

The rebellion of several of the leading Moghul officials of Bengal and Bihar followed immediately upon this declaration, headed by Masum Khan, Jagirdar of Patna, an Afghan noble, known to the court as *Asi*, or the Rebel, because of his restless and ambitious tendencies. By April 1580 the rebels had succeeded in overrunning the whole of the province of Bengal and capturing the imperial viceroy Muzaffar Khan Turbati, whom they barbarously tortured to death.

This may be looked upon as about the most critical period of Akbar's reign. Never, excepting perhaps in the very first days after his accession to the throne, had his sovereignty and even his life stood in greater jeopardy, and never had he given more convincing proof of his courage, greatness of mind, quickness of decision, and, above all, of knowledge of his fellow-men.

He knew himself to be surrounded by traitors at his court; he knew that one of his ministers was actively engaged in the conspiracy to bring about his overthrow, an event which was fervently prayed for by all orthodox Musulmans

throughout the empire; and yet, never for one moment did his coolness forsake him, nor did he waver in his decision to carry out the task which he had imposed upon himself and which he believed to be a right one.

Akbar had raised the Hindu population of his dominions from their degrading position to one of equality with his Moslem subjects; he had entrusted the governorship of cities and vast provinces to Rajput princes formerly his bitter foes.

He never doubted that they would rally round him in his peril, just because of the generosity with which he had treated them in their hour of defeat.

The Viceroyalty of the Punjab, the Gate of India, had been conferred upon no less a person than the Raja Bhagwan Das of Amber, his heir Man Singh being appointed his deputy with the governorship of Lahore. Akbar recognised with remarkable penetration that the Indus was the real point of danger, and, at the commencement of the Bengal revolt, had despatched Todar Mal in command of an army against the rebels, whilst he himself remained in the North in case of any hostile action on the part of Mohammed Hakim. Todar Mal's excellent leadership was powerless to stem the progress of the very strong enemy force, and he found himself compelled to retreat to Mungir.

Here he and the troops under his command gallantly bore the hardships of a siege; Todar Mal several times proudly spurned any suggestion to surrender, and at the end of four months was relieved by an imperial army commanded by Mirza Aziz Koka, the Emperor's foster-brother.

In December of the same year there were signs of activity from Afghanistan, and two raids took place into the Punjab by the troops of Mohammed Hakim, both of which were repulsed by Bhagwan Das and his Rajputs.

In the second raid the commander, an officer named Shadman, was killed, and amongst his personal effects several letters were found proving beyond any doubt the treachery of the acting Minister of Finance, Khwaja Shah Mansur, who was immediately arrested and put into prison.

Invasion of the Punjab by Mohammed Hakim.

Probably owing to this discovery, Mohammed Hakim decided to strike, and, placing himself at the head of a force of 15,000 men, advanced as far as the great fortress of Rohtas on the banks of the Kahan river, originally erected to check the raids of the wild Gakkar tribes.

The commandant of the fortress, a loyal Musulman officer named Yusuf Khan, sent a defiant refusal to the rebel's

demand to surrender, and Mohammed Hakim continued his advance into the heart of the Punjab until he reached the gates of Lahore, where he repeated his insolent request made at Rohtas to the garrison to capitulate. On reaching the Land of the Five Rivers he expected to be met by Moslem nobles and officials whom he thought it quite possible to win over to his cause, instead of which he was face to face with one of the most powerful and ancient Rajput clans, whose chiefs, intensely proud of the implicit faith reposed in them by their Emperor, were filled with one desire only, that of justifying it to the utmost.

Man Singh's reply to Mirza Mohammed Hakim was to close the gates of Lahore against the invaders, and the ramparts were spontaneously manned by his clansmen eager to prove their loyalty alike to their chiefs and to their suzerain.

Mohammed Hakim had undertaken this campaign in the belief, fostered by his supporters in India, that he had only to cross the Indus to find the Musulmans flock to his banner, and that the Rajput princes would have but one object, that of regaining their own independence.

In both suppositions he was fated to disappointment, for only a comparatively small number of the Musulman nobles, even though desirous of his success, would actually link their fortunes with his until they had obtained more convincing proof that his venture would lead to victory; and the Rajput princes, animated solely by their desire to prove their loyalty to the imperial throne, never for one moment thought to avail themselves of the general confusion to further any personal aims.

Mohammed Hakim, completely disheartened, especially after Man Singh's refusal to surrender Lahore, retreated to his own dominions in a state of panic, and so badly organised was his retreat that, though unopposed, he lost no less than 400 men in crossing the river Chenab.

Retreat of Mohammed Hakim. Akbar's march on Kabul.

Meanwhile the despatches which arrived at Fathpur Sikri from Mirza Aziz Koka and Todar Mal stating that the resistance of the Bengal and Bihar rebels was weakening, brought conviction to the Emperor's mind that the moment had come for the striking of the final blow which was to shatter the conspiracy at its very centre, Kabul.

In a sense this was the hour of Akbar's supreme triumph, when he reaped to the fullest extent the fruits of his policy of tolerance and conciliation. All the great Rajput feudatories of the empire followed Amber's lead; the Haras of Bundi; the Rathors of Marwar and Bikanir and the desert

Bhatis of Jaisalmir upheld the imperial standard, as did also the Bhaghela Rajputs of Rewah in Central India, representatives of the famous Chalukya clan which had at one time reigned over Hindu Gujarat.

Furthermore, the Emperor received support from all the most cultured and brilliant Musulman elements at the court, men who thought for themselves and were not influenced by the narrowness and bigotry of the Ulema. Men of the quality of Mirza Abdurrahim and the Emperor's foster-brother, Aziz Khan Koka, could not fail to grasp the far-reaching advantages of Akbar's reforms as contrasted with those sectarian and political quarrels which had played so great a part under the rule of previous Musulman sovereigns.

These men never wavered in their loyalty to Akbar and the principles for which he stood, but the man of all others who encouraged and heartened him in his difficult work, never leaving his side in case he might require counsel, was Abul Fazl, so aptly styled by the Jesuit missionaries the Emperor's Jonathan. The troops, both Hindu and Musulman, far from being disbanded after the flight of Mohammed Hakim, continued to mass at Fathpur Sikri, and in a proclamation issued by the Emperor to his soldiers, he announced that they would receive eight months' pay in advance. All preparations having been made, Akbar, on February 8, 1581, set out for Kabul at the head of a formidable army. Rai Rai Singh, heir apparent of Bikanir, was entrusted with the command of the advance guard, and Akbar himself took control of the main body and was accompanied by his eldest son Prince Salim and his second son Prince Murad, now respectively twelve and ten years of age ; the latter's Jesuit tutor, Father Monserrate, whose presence the Emperor especially desired ; and lastly, by his faithful friend Abul Fazl. The treacherous minister, Khwaja Shah Mansur, who, after being temporarily removed from office and placed under arrest was restored to his post, was also amongst the Emperor's suite, and it is more than likely that Akbar's apparent clemency had been dictated by his wish to watch personally the minister's activities.

The army had advanced but a few stages when more letters from the hand of Mohammed Hakim to Khwaja Shah Mansur were intercepted by loyal officers of the Crown. Akbar could, under these circumstances, hesitate no longer. Khwaja Shah Mansur was once more placed under arrest, and, after being publicly accused of treason by Abul Fazl, was hanged on a tree before the eyes of the entire army.

When the Emperor and his army reached the Indus, the great river was in flood, which delayed his advance by fifty days. During this time, Akbar, whilst personally supervising his vast force, still found leisure to spend part of his day hunting, and at night occupied many of the hours which should have been devoted to rest in theological discussions with Father Monserrate.

As soon as the floods had subsided, the Emperor sent the youthful Prince Murad across the river in nominal command of the advance guard, composed of several thousand cavalry and 500 elephants. The prince was accompanied by some of his father's most distinguished officers, but in spite of his personal valour and the bravery of these officers, a terrible disaster was only narrowly averted. They were suddenly attacked by a vastly superior force sent by Mohammed Hakim, and would most certainly have been overwhelmed but for the timely assistance of Man Singh of Amber at the head of a body of Rajput cavalry who, sounding the war-cry of the Kachwahas, " Sita Rama Jaiyati ! ", " Victory to Sita and Rama ", charged full into the enemy and rescued them from their perilous position.

Occupation of Kabul. Triumph of Akbar.

In July 1581 the Emperor and his army crossed the Indus, and a force of picked troops under the command of Prince Salim were detailed to occupy the Khyber Pass. From that moment the imperial progress was practically unchecked. When on August 3 an advance party commanded by Prince Murad took possession of Kabul, they found that Mohammed Hakim had fled to the hills, and six days later, on August 9, Akbar himself made his triumphant entry into the city.

Following upon his victory the Emperor found himself faced by the difficult quandary as to how to deal with his brother. The advice tendered to him by Father Monserrate, which was naturally in accordance with the principles of Christianity, was to extend a free pardon to the offender ; the greatest number of his officers, on the other hand, begged to be allowed to punish him themselves by laying an ambush for Mohammed Hakim and finally ridding Akbar of his presence.

The gentle counsels prevailed and the Emperor announced his decision in the following noble words, which gave evidence of one of the finest traits in his character, his deep reverence for the memory of his father : " Hakim Mirza is a memorial of the Emperor Humayun ; though he has acted ungratefully I can be no other than forbearing ".[1]

[1] Jarret, *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. iii. p. 383.

Shortly after Akbar's entry into Kabul, Bakht-un-Nisa, sister of Mohammed Hakim and the Emperor's half-sister, arrived in the capital with the object of begging Akbar's clemency for her brother. The Emperor received her most kindly and told her that he intended to place the government of Kabul in her hands, but, at the same time, gave her to understand that, if at any future time she wished to restore it to Mohammed Hakim, he would not raise any objection to her so doing. On December 1, 1581, Akbar returned to Fathpur Sikri, where his arrival was celebrated with splendour almost unparalleled even in India.

Foundation by Akbar of the Din Ilahi.

The Emperor, proud though he necessarily felt at his political triumph, realised that it could not bring him complete satisfaction until the spiritual revolution of which it was but the prelude had been accomplished. He had studied Hinduism, Zoroastrianism and Christianity, also the beliefs of the Jains, and had found much in these four creeds to appeal to his soul; his fervent desire now centred upon selecting the most beautiful and convincing tenets from each faith and uniting them in one, and thus there came into the world in the year 1582 the *Din Ilahi* or Divine Faith, a new religion which was founded by Akbar and of which he was the supreme head, and Abul Fazl the high priest. The *Din Ilahi* embodied the highest ideals of Christianity and Hinduism, with which were mingled the doctrines of Mohammed, Zoroaster and Mahavira. The influence of Abul Fazl can be clearly traced in the accepted dogma of this new faith, and the lofty ideal which the Emperor and his devoted friend strove to attain is perhaps best expressed in these singularly beautiful words, composed by Abul Fazl, and engraved by order of Akbar on the walls of a temple dedicated to the new faith:

"O God, in every temple I see people that seek Thee, and in every language I hear spoken people praise Thee. Polytheism and Islam feel after Thee. Each religion says 'Thou art "One" without Equal.' If it be a Mosque people murmur the holy prayer, and if it be a Christian Church people ring the bell from love to Thee. Sometimes I frequent the Christian Cloister and sometimes the Mosque. But it is Thou whom I search from temple to temple. Thy elect have no dealings with either heresy or orthodoxy, for neither of them stands behind the screen of Thy truth.[1]

"Heresy to the heretic and religion to the orthodox. But

[1] Blochmann, *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. i. Autobiography of Abul Fazl, p. xxxii.

the dust of the rose petal belongs to the heart of the perfume-seller ".[1]

The total number of members of the *Din Ilahi* throughout the empire probably never exceeded a few thousands, and of the great figures of the imperial court, only one Hindu, the Brahmin Birbal; the Moslem Shaikh Mubarak and his sons, and the Emperor's foster-brother, Mirza Aziz Koka, became converts to the new religion, but its influence could not be correctly estimated by the numbers who joined it.

Akbar did not put pressure upon any of his people to embrace the tenets of the *Din Ilahi*, but the mere fact that he personally was the founder of the divine faith raised him in their eyes far above the rank ever held by any of his Musulman predecessors; it made of him a serene and impartial figure, whom all his myriad subjects could look upon as a father, sure of receiving at his hands sympathy, tolerance and justice.

Artistic and literary revival in Hindustan.

The return to political peace and the establishment of spiritual harmony brought a remarkable intellectual literary and artistic renaissance in its train, which affected the Hindu and Musulman elements in a great measure, and brought each to the realisation of the culture and ideals of the other.

The literary and poetic talent of the Hindus, once so brilliant, had been almost entirely lost under the weight of oppression practised by the early Mohammedan dynasties; the new era of liberty saw a revival of all its ancient beauty.

In the sacred city of Benares a hitherto unknown Brahmin religious mendicant named Tulsi Das emerged from his obscurity and gave to the world, amongst other poems, a masterpiece named the Ram-charit-manas, which was a rendering in colloquial Hindi of the great Sanskrit epic the Ramayana, and which rivalled that of Kalidasa, the great Hindu poet of ancient days.

Unknown to himself, Akbar had by the policy of tolerance which made it possible for Tulsi Das to write this epic, bestowed upon millions of his subjects, not only of that time but for all successive generations up to the present day, the great spiritual feast of being able to read the beautiful story of Rama and Sita, which would otherwise have remained inaccessible to all excepting to those who could read and understand the Sanskrit original.

The Emperor, though himself illiterate, had got to know

[1] The meaning of the last line is that Abul Fazl seeks to draw the best from all creeds as the perfume-seller draws the essence from the rose.

the great Hindu epics by intercourse with men of the type of Birbal, and his appreciation of the bardic poems and songs of the Rajputs had come to him through his friendship with the gallant Prithvi Raj, younger son of Raja Kalyan Mal of Bikanir, and with the famous Rajput minstrel, Tansen of Gwalior.

He realised to the full the influence of literature in the forming of national ideals, and, by his orders, learned Musulmans at the court commenced the translation of the gems of Sanskrit literature into Persian.

The *Lilavati*, a famous Sanskrit treatise on arithmetic, in the words of Abul Fazl, "lost its Hindu veil and received a Persian garb" at the hands of his brother, the poet Faizi, and, actuated possibly by a grim sense of humour, Akbar entrusted the historian Maulana Abdul Kadir of Budaun, better known as Budauni, the leader of the orthodox Musulman party at the court, with the greater part of the formidable task of translating the Mahabharata and the Ramayana.

In spite of his detestation openly avowed for the Mahabharata, Budauni most ably and conscientiously fulfilled his duty, and the poem was translated into Persian under the name of the "Razmnamah," or Book of Wars, and magnificently illuminated and illustrated copies by the court artists were distributed amongst the nobles in attendance on the Emperor. At Fathpur Sikri there came into being a new and liberal school of Islamic thought, whose members disavowed the narrow bigotry of Mahmud of Ghazni and Shahab-ud-Din of Ghor and took their inspiration from the Golden Age of Islam when the universities of Baghdad and Cordova had admitted as students men of all creeds on a footing of equality. The most prominent leader of this school was the brilliantly clever Abdurrahim, son of Bairam Khan, a gifted linguist, poet and man of letters. His mansion became the meeting-place of the learned men of every race and creed throughout the empire, and his wonderful knowledge of languages enabled Abdurrahim to speak to each of his guests in his own tongue, now greeting a Moghul noble in his native Turki, now a Persian dervish in the vocabulary of Iran, or discussing some knotty point of Hindu philosophy in faultless Sanskrit with some erudite Brahmin pandit.

The Emperor possessed a most extensive library, which included volumes on every subject from the pagan philosophy of ancient Greece to the Gospels recently translated

into Persian by Abul Fazl. Akbar's evenings were spent in a small circle of intimates whom he gathered around him, one of whom would read aloud, selecting different works on each occasion.

Sometimes Abdurrahim would read his own translation from Turki into Persian of the Memoirs of Babur, the Emperor's grandfather, while at others Prithvi Raj of Bikanir would recite verses from his own newly composed masterpiece, the *Veli Krisana Rukamani Ri*, a poem immortalising the love story of Krishna and Rukmini.

There were certain customs still adhered to by the Hindus which Akbar, in spite of his great affection for the Rajputs and admiration for their ideals, was too broad-minded and humane not to condemn as barbarous survivals.

Akbar's efforts for Hindu social reform.

The rigid law which enforced perpetual widowhood on a young girl married in infancy to an equally youthful husband who had died before she actually knew him, seemed an outrage to the Emperor, and equally, whilst fully realising the high ideal and heroism of the *sati*, his whole nature revolted against the continuance of this custom under his rule.

He tried to persuade his Hindu consorts to use their moral influence to encourage remarriage for Hindu widows, and he decreed that no woman, unless by her own free will and desire, should henceforth become *sati* on the funeral pyre of her lord.[1]

This decree gave rise to a dramatic incident, which gives proof of Akbar's chivalry and determination to have his laws obeyed even at great personal risk. Jai Mal Kachwaha, a cousin of Raja Bhagwan Das of Amber, had succumbed to heat-stroke in Bengal, where the Emperor had sent him on a mission. His body was brought back to his home in Northern India by his clansmen, but his young widow, a daughter of Udai Singh of Marwar, refused to become *sati*. Her stepson, likewise called Udai Singh, encouraged by the *Purohit* or family priest, determined to ignore the imperial edict and to compel her to the sacrifice. At the last moment the Emperor, probably through one of his Rajputni consorts, heard of the fate awaiting the princess, and instantly mounting the swiftest horse in his stables, galloped unattended to the scene of the *sati*. The hapless young widow had already

[1] "It is a strange commentary on the magnanimity of men that they should seek their deliverance through the self-sacrifice of their wives." Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari* ("Happy sayings of His Majesty"). Jarret, vol. iii. p. 398.

taken her place on the funeral pyre and the flames had almost reached the hem of the bridal raiment which she was wearing, when suddenly the circle of armed Rajputs and chanting Brahmins were scattered apart, and Akbar rode up to the pyre at a furious pace and lifted the terrified woman to a place of safety.

For a moment the Rajputs, roused to indignation by this encroachment upon their laws, grasped their swords and the Emperor's life hung in the balance ; but almost immediately two of his most faithful Rajput officers, Jaganath Kachwaha and Rai Sal Shaikhawat, came to his assistance, and Udai Singh made no further attempt to resist his imperial master's decree. The princess was placed under the protection of her Rathor relatives, but Akbar, greatly incensed by the disregard of his command, was on the point of ordering the immediate execution of the would-be instigators of the *sati* when Bhagwan Das of Amber, head of their clan, pleaded for mercy on their behalf and obtained the Emperor's pardon.

India comes into closer relations with the West.

Akbar's reign witnessed a complete upheaval throughout the known world of those days. It was an era not only of radical spiritual changes but of most important geographical discovery, and, with the finding of new fields of expansion, there inevitably came international, political and commercial rivalry.

The armies of Cortez and Pizarro, assisted by the power of the Catholic Church, had overthrown two mighty empires and had gained a vast dominion for Spain from which all foreigners, and quite especially Protestants, were rigidly excluded.

England had definitely emerged from feudalism and was now a Protestant country under the rule of the great Queen Elizabeth ; her merchants, imbued with the spirit of adventure, wished to carry their trade to distant lands, but at the same time, not feeling strong enough to challenge the commercial supremacy of Spain in those South American waters which she had appropriated, looked to the Near East, and then far beyond to India, as possible markets for their goods.

First English mission to India.

In the year 1583, two years after Queen Elizabeth had granted a royal charter entitled " The Company of Merchants to the Levant ", a charter which the members of the company evidently considered sufficiently elastic to allow them to penetrate as far as India, a mission from the company which included John Newbery, a London merchant, William Leeds, a jeweller, and Ralph Fitch, also a merchant, reached

Fathpur Sikri. Newbery, the head of the party, was the bearer of an autograph letter from Queen Elizabeth to " the most invincible and most mighty Prince Lord Zelabdim Echebar ". In this she begged the Moghul emperor to extend a cordial welcome to her subjects.

There exists no record of the audience granted by Akbar to the British mission, although a very interesting account of his Indian travels by the merchant Ralph Fitch has been preserved, but the incident is noteworthy because it represents the first occasion upon which the Moghuls and the nation which was destined one day to rule in India came into contact.

Akbar proceeds to Lahore. Death of Mohammed Hakim.

In the autumn of 1585 a combination of circumstances made it necessary for the Emperor to transfer the seat of government from Fathpur Sikri to Lahore; foremost amongst these was the death of his half-brother Mirza Mohammed Hakim.

This prince expired at Kabul at the early age of thirty-one as a result of chronic intemperance, and had left a child of tender years as his heir. Akbar had always treated his half-brother with kindness and generosity, but he realised that he could not permit a minor to remain as nominal ruler over the Afghan territories of the empire when the actual power would really be in the hands of some ambitious local noble of doubtful loyalty to the Crown. He was all the more justified in taking up a strong attitude now, as even before Mohammed Hakim's death the outlying district of Badakshan had been overrun by the Uzbeks under Abdullah of Bokhara.

Raja Man Singh was sent by Akbar to Kabul with instructions to take over the government in the Emperor's name and then bring Mohammed Hakim's young sons back to India under a guard of honour. Man Singh accomplished his task most ably, and Kabul passed under the direct rule of the Emperor without any disturbance.

History of Kashmir.

It was, however, not only the death of his half-brother and the circumstances arising from it which made the Emperor desirous of taking up his residence at Lahore. He had indisputable proof that the reigning King of Kashmir, Yusuf Chak, was hostile to him, and this fact, owing to the geographical position of Kashmir, constituted a grave menace to his supremacy.

Attracted to no small extent also by the beauty and fertility of the country, Akbar determined to take the decisive step and attempt the subjugation of the kingdom.

It is here necessary to make a short digression to that far distant time following upon the fall of the strange cosmopolitan Indian empire of the Kushans, when the beautiful valley of Kashmir, protected by its mountains and ruled over by kings of Scythian origin, had been safe from foreign invasion.

In 1336 a change occurred and the throne was usurped by a Mohammedan named Shah Mir, minister of the last Hindu king, and from that moment Islam succeeded Hinduism as the state religion of the Kashmiris.

The successive rule of Musulman sovereigns did not, however, prevent the country from continuing to live its own life undisturbed by the different Mohammedan dynasties who gained and lost the imperial throne of Delhi.

The Emperor Babur had, on one occasion, attempted to intervene in a local revolution, but with practically no result, and Kashmir maintained its independence until twenty-four years after the accession of Akbar to the imperial throne in 1580 ; the reigning king, Yusuf Chak, had been deposed by some of the nobles of his court and fled to India to seek the Emperor's help. On this occasion Yusuf Chak had pledged himself to accept Akbar's suzerainty as the price of his assistance, but when in the end he regained his kingdom without the necessity of intervention by Moghul troops and had got safely back to Srinagar, his capital, he evaded his obligations.

Instead of attending the imperial court in person as did the other vassal princes of the empire, he merely sent his son Yakub Chak as his representative. It was this action on the King of Kashmir's part which convinced Akbar of his want of good faith, and which, combined with his desire to incorporate the country into his empire, brought about in the year 1586 the campaign in Kashmir.

An army under the joint command of Raja Bhagwan Das of Amber and Kasim Khan, the Emperor's chief military engineer, was sent against Kashmir, and in spite of the heavy falls of snow by which their progress was impeded and the intense cold, the Moghuls inflicted a severe and decisive defeat upon the forces of Yusuf Chak in the Buliyas Pass, which leads into the valley of Kashmir. This defeat was followed by the surrender of Yusuf Chak and his eldest son Yakub, and by the definite promise by the King of Kashmir to accept the suzerainty of the Emperor, and to have Akbar's name read before his own in the Khutba in all the mosques of his dominions.

Moghul disaster in the Yusufzai country.

At the time when the Kashmir expedition was making such satisfactory progress a terrible tragedy was preparing in another part of the North-west Frontier, which was inhabited by the Yusufzai tribe of Pathans.

These tribesmen, like all Pathans, were fanatics, and of recent years had fallen under the influence of an heretical religious teacher named Bayazid, whose principal doctrine claimed that his followers, "the faithful", had a right to seize the lands and property of any who differed from them.

It is not unnatural that a law of this kind should appeal strongly to the predatory Yusufzai tribesmen, and early in the new year 1586 they revolted under the leadership of a boy of fourteen named Jalala, who had just succeeded Bayazid as head of the sect founded by him and known as the Roshani or Illuminati. Akbar, receiving news of the rising, proceeded to the celebrated fortress of Attock on the Indus, which he made his headquarters and whence he despatched a punitive force against the rebels, commanded jointly by Zain Khan Kokaltash, a distinguished Musulman soldier and noble of the court; Hakim Abul Fath, a learned Persian Alim, formerly Moslem Chief Justice of Bengal; and lastly Raja Birbal, the Emperor's earliest friend.

The selection of Raja Birbal was disastrous both for himself and the troops under his command, for although an able statesman, he was not a great soldier, and to render the conditions still more difficult, Hakim Abul Fath, from the very commencement of the military operations, disagreed and quarrelled violently with Zain Khan, who was the only one of the three commanders qualified to take real responsibility in the field.

The dissensions between the commanders naturally led to mistakes in the plan of campaign, and the Moghuls, when passing through the mountain pass of Malandarai, found themselves suddenly completely surrounded and assailed on all sides by the Yusufzais.

Exactly half of the number of troops sent out from Attock returned; amongst these were the two rival commanders, Zain Khan and Hakim Abul Fath, but Birbal and 500 of his officers perished amidst the snows of the North-west Frontier.

Akbar's grief was heartrending and terrible in its intensity. Birbal, then known only as Mahesh Das, the poor Brahmin minstrel, had, when the boy Akbar was virtually a prisoner of Bairam Khan, been the first to whom he had

confided his youthful dreams of a possible Hindu-Musulman unity; Birbal had been his first Hindu adherent, and, with the one exception of Abul Fazl, was his closest friend, and finally the mighty Emperor and the faithful servant and minister, now raised to the rank of Raja, had together watched the childish vision take definite shape and blossom forth into splendid reality.

Meanwhile the campaign against Kashmir had been safely concluded, and a treaty of peace drawn up by Man Singh and Kasim Khan with Yusuf Chak of Kashmir.

It so happened that at the very moment when Akbar had received the crushing intelligence of the death of his friend, Yusuf Chak and his son arrived in the imperial camp to pay homage to their suzerain.

The Emperor, however, disapproved entirely of the terms of the agreement concluded by his generals with the King of Kashmir, whose sudden access of loyalty he distrusted, and moreover the disaster to his army on the North-west Frontier had made him realise more strongly even than before the advisability of having the frontier territories of his empire under the direct control of his own officers.

He refused to ratify the treaty but offered to grant pensions to Yusuf Chak and to his son, at the same time annexing Kashmir to the empire. Yusuf Chak accepted the Emperor's terms, but his son, who was made of sterner metal, succeeded in escaping to Kashmir, where he proclaimed himself King.

Annexation of Kashmir.

The Kashmiris, however, were no longer imbued with those warlike qualities which in ancient days had led their victorious armies to the banks of the Ganges. They made but the feeblest pretence of rallying to their prince's banner, and it was an easy thing for the Moghul troops to overrun the entire valley of Kashmir and to occupy Srinagar. Yakub Chak was captured, and he and his father were sent to Raj Mahal, the viceregal capital of Bengal and Bihar, as state prisoners. Kashmir with its dependencies was annexed to the empire, and two years later the ex-king and his son were released and enrolled by Akbar amongst his *Mansabdars*.

In April 1589 the Emperor visited Kashmir, and so impressed was he with the beauty of the valley, that he ever after delighted in calling it his private garden.

From Srinagar he proceeded to Kabul, where he spent two months, and it was during his stay in this city that he received the intelligence of the death, within a few weeks of each other, of the Diwan, Raja Todar Mal, whom he had left

in charge at Lahore, and of the Raja Bhagwan Das of Amber who had, at the time of his death, held the Viceroyalty of Bengal.

Thus by a tragic fate Akbar had, within a brief space, been deprived of three of the great Hindu statesmen who had stood by him when he freed himself from the tutelage of Bairam Khan, and who had loyally assisted him to build up the new India.

Akbar immediately bestowed upon Man Singh, then Governor of Bihar, the firman of investiture as Raja of Amber and raised him to the Viceroyalty. In addition he conferred upon the ruler of Amber the governorship of the city and fortress of Ajmere and created him a commander of 5000. His conquest of Kashmir provided Akbar with a secure frontier towards the region of the Hindu Kush, but his hold on Kabul was somewhat in jeopardy owing to the fact that the important and not very distant city of Kandahar was under Persian rule, whilst Southern Sind still remained an independent state, whose monarch, Jani Beg Arghun, belonged to the family of that Shah Hussein Arghun who had refused to shelter the Emperor Humayun during his flight from India.

Career of Mirza Abdurrahim.

In the following year, 1590, the Emperor appointed Mirza Abdurrahim Governor of Multan, and entrusted him with the task of attempting the conquest of Lower Sind.

The son of Bairam Khan had now attained the zenith of his brilliant career. Six years previously, whilst Viceroy of Gujarat, he had proved the excellence of his leadership and his prowess in facing a formidable revolt by Muzaffar Shah, the former king of that country, who had escaped from captivity. The rebels, 40,000 strong as opposed to 10,000 troops under the Viceroy's command, succeeded in storming Ahmedabad. In spite of the great disparity in numbers, the young general gave his men the order to attack, with the result that he gained a decisive victory known as the victory of Sarkhej (January 1584), followed by the recapture of Ahmedabad and the flight of Muzaffar to Kathiawar. The Emperor's reward for this brilliant feat was the bestowal of the title of Khan Khanan, formerly held by his father Bairam Khan, which carried with it the rank of First Noble of the Empire.

Invasion and conquest of Southern Sind.

In the early months of the year 1591, the Khan Khanan had completed all his preparations for the invasion of Southern Sind and, heading his troops, gave the order to advance.

Jani Beg Arghun and his army put up a gallant defence both by land and by employing armed ships on the Indus, but finally their resistance was broken and he was compelled to surrender, his capital Tatta being occupied by the Moghuls.

His bravery, however, was not lost upon Akbar, who always admired and sympathised with a courageous foe. He received Jani Beg Arghun, when he arrived at the court to offer his allegiance, with every honour, then and there created him a commander of 5000, and informed him that he was free to return to his own dominions and to hold them as a fief of the imperial crown. This generous action made of Jani Beg one of the Emperor's most devoted vassals, and this bond was still further cemented when he somewhat later became a convert to the Divine Faith.

Further Jesuit missions to the Moghul court.

The first Jesuit mission to the Moghul court had returned to Goa in the year 1583 and was succeeded by a second one, which arrived at Lahore in 1590 and left again within the year.

In 1594 the Emperor renewed his request to the Viceroy of Goa for another mission to be sent to the court, with the result that the Provincial of the Jesuits despatched a third to the capital of the Punjab, of which Father Jerome Xavier, grand-nephew of St. Francis and one of the most distinguished Catholic missionaries of Portuguese India, was the head.

A warm personal friendship sprang up almost immediately between the Moghul emperor and the Catholic priest, and Xavier and his colleagues, Fathers Emmanuel Pinheiro and Benedict of Goes, were, at Akbar's express command, always exempt from making before him the *sijda* or prostration which he exacted even from his proud Rajput vassals, and were received at the court with honours usually reserved for independent foreign sovereigns.

A splendid mansion on the bank of the river Ravi became the official residence of the mission, and one of the apartments, set aside and consecrated as a chapel, was adorned on the great Catholic festivals by the images of the Virgin and Child and the Saints, given to Akbar by Aquaviva and lent by the Emperor for the occasion.

In addition to this a grant of land was made in the city of Lahore for the purpose of erecting a Catholic church, and the Emperor made a point of encouraging his nobles at the court to allow their sons to be educated by the missionaries. Surveying with his mind's eye the full extent of his vast

dominions, realising as he must have done that his ambitions in that line had been fully accomplished, and that, above all others, the great purpose of his life, that of political and spiritual union, had been attained, Akbar had just cause to be proud.

Condition of the empire. Akbar's troubles with his sons.

In spite of the inevitable wars which had been fought and which had in 1592 added the conquest and subjugation of Orissa by Man Singh to his many victories, the real position of Akbar had been built up to a far greater extent upon the foundations of admiration and love, which his personality inspired amongst his people, than upon the power of the sword.

Akbar's subjects, rich and poor, belonging as they did to all races, castes and creeds, realised that it was to his wisdom, to his untiring efforts for their good, that they owed the transformation their lives had undergone. The multitude would gather around the palace at the hour when he was wont to appear at the window and would prostrate themselves before him, whilst women with sick children would raise them to him, imploring his blessing, firmly convinced that, gifted with Divine power, he possessed the means to cure all ills.

It had become proverbial throughout the empire when speaking of good fortune coming to any individual to say, "as fortunate as Akbar", and yet, such is the tragedy of life, beneath all the power and glory his worldly possessions had brought him, beneath all the devotion he inspired amongst his subjects, this mighty emperor's heart was almost breaking with grief over the unworthiness of his own sons.

The curse of intemperance, which had claimed many victims amongst the members of the house of Timur and which the great Emperor Babur had found it difficult, in his own case, to keep within reasonable bounds, had caught his two youthful descendants within its iron grip.

Prince Murad and Prince Danyal, the Emperor's second and youngest sons, were almost constantly under the influence of drink, which in the case of Prince Murad completely clouded his naturally fine intelligence.

In Prince Salim, the heir to the imperial throne, the degrading and dangerous results of intemperance were, on the surface, less apparent for the reason that he was possessed of a stronger physical constitution, but his indulgence in the evil habit was no less and had the worst influence upon his character and temperament generally.

The vice to which he was addicted had made of this able and, by nature, generous-minded prince, a morose and at times cruel man, and, far from taking his father's severe but always affectionate remonstrances in a penitent spirit, he became more and more sullen and resentful. Abul Fazl, whose devotion to the Emperor gained, if possible, in strength as the years moved on, could not fail to share his master's grief at the conduct of his sons, and he viewed with ever-increasing dread the fate that awaited the great empire which he had helped to create when Akbar's successor would come to the throne.

The extreme orthodox Musulman faction at the court, quiescent since the failure of the rebellion of 1580, but never truly reconciled, now saw their opportunity and were quick to grasp the possibility of undermining the Emperor's influence, and using Salim as a means by which to endanger the sovereign's position, pursued the policy of actively fostering the resentment which Akbar's condemnation of his conduct had raised in the prince ; and they also succeeded in filling the mind of Salim with intense hatred of the great minister who had, he knew, such powerful influence with his father.

To make the work of the plotters easier, Prince Salim possessed one real and, in a sense, legitimate grievance against the Emperor—his father's attitude towards his deep and unalterable love for the girl who later, under the name of Nur Jehan (Light of the World), was to play such a conspicuous part in the history of the empire.

Story of Mihr-un-Nisa.

In the year 1577, when Salim was eight years of age, there arrived at Akbar's court a Persian political refugee named Ghiyas Beg. On their trek from Persia, whilst the fugitives were resting at Kandahar, the wife of Ghiyas Beg, Azizan Bibi, had given birth to a daughter to whom her parents, it would seem almost prophetically, gave the name of Mihr-un-Nisa, or " Sun among Women ".

Ghiyas Beg, who was a man of high culture and ability, soon gained favour with the Emperor, and within a few years the totally impoverished and homeless refugee had risen to the much-coveted dignity of Lord High Treasurer of the empire.

The child Mihr-un-Nisa grew to maidenhood at the imperial court and blossomed into exceptional beauty.

Azizan Bibi, her mother, now held rank as one of the great ladies of the court and was on terms of closest intimacy with the ladies of the imperial harem, notably with the

Emperor's first wife, Ruquayyah Sultan Begum, whom she visited frequently, always accompanied by Mihr-un-Nisa.

One of the innovations introduced by Akbar at his court, which took place once every month, was a festival known as the Khushroz or "Day of Joy". On this occasion all the merchants of the different bazaars in the capital were invited to set up their stalls in one of the courtyards of the palace, and the Emperor would move freely amongst the throng, would bargain with the merchants and listen to their grievances on trade and taxation. Invitations to attend the Khushroz were sent by the Emperor's consorts to the wives and families of all the nobles, and of course Azizan Bibi and her daughter were included.

It was on one of these occasions that Mihr-un-Nisa, weary of the heat and noise of the bazaar, strayed away into the imperial gardens and, at the turn of a path, encountered Prince Salim for the first time.

Retreating behind a bush, she hastily veiled herself, but Prince Salim, who was carrying on his wrist a couple of tame pigeons of which he was very fond, and who believed himself to be speaking to a slave girl from the palace, commanded her to hold them for him. The girl, in obedience to his request, put out her hand, but one of the birds took fright and flew away.

Greatly annoyed at the loss of the dove, the prince broke into abuse of the supposed slave girl, whom he accused of clumsiness, asking her how it was that she had allowed the bird to escape.

"So, my lord", answered Mihr-un-Nisa, and, laughing defiantly, deliberately set the other dove at liberty. At the same time her veil fell from her face, and realising this, she fled back to the bazaar. This brief moment sufficed to convince the prince that he had looked upon the face of the most beautiful woman in the world and that he had met the love of his life.

Salim immediately sought Akbar and begged him to ask Ghiyas Beg in his name for the hand of his daughter in marriage, only to find that she was already affianced by her father to Ali Kuli Beg Istajlu, a young Persian soldier who had served with distinction under the Khan Khanan in Sind.

In an earlier period of Musulman India this betrothal would almost certainly have been set aside in favour of the heir to the throne, but to Akbar this course meant the violation of justice and as such was unthinkable. Acting under an error of judgement, the Emperor thought that, by

hurrying on the marriage between Mihr-un-Nisa and Ali Kuli Beg Istajlu, he would bring his son to accept the inevitable, but he was mistaken.

Salim, far from being reconciled, did not relinquish hope even after the marriage was an accomplished fact; and the breach between father and son was widened, a circumstance welcomed by the Moslem conspirators at the court.

One of the great achievements of Akbar's reign, almost the greatest, because it derived its strength from the spiritual tolerance which he extended to all his subjects of every nationality and creed, was the union of the Rajput kingdoms of Northern India into a federation of states of which he was the supreme head.

Events in the Deccan. Fall of Vijayanagar.

At the end of the year 1593, when the position of affairs at the imperial court were such as we have just recently described, the Emperor's ever-active mind evolved a plan which aimed at carrying his rule to the tableland of the Deccan, and at making of that country, too, a federation of kingdoms without in any way weakening the existing dynasties, while yet requiring of the reigning monarchs that they should recognise him as their overlord.

A century, approximately, had elapsed since the murder of Mahmud Gawan which had preceded the break-up of the great Bahmani kingdom, and two of the states built up upon its ruins, the Adil Shahi kingdom of Bijapur and the Nizam Shahi Sultanate of Ahmednagar, had attained the position of great powers.

In 1510, Kutub-ul-Mulk, Viceroy of Telingana, the only great officer of the Bahmani kingdom who, up to that time had remained loyal to the royal house of Bidar, followed the example of his former colleagues, declared his independence, and, founding the Kutub Shahi kingdom of Golconda, ascended the throne under the title of Kuli Kutub Shah.

Bidar itself was only under the nominal sovereignty of the Bahmani kings, all real power being in the hands of Kasim Barid and his successive descendants in the office of Wazir.

When in 1539 death removed Kalim Ullah, the last scion of the house of Bahmani, the royal house ceased to exist, and Ali Barid Kasim's grandson ascended the throne of Bidar as the first monarch of the Barid Shahi dynasty.

In many respects, notably in their tolerance towards their Hindu subjects, in their civilisation and culture, in literature and art, the Musulman kingdoms of the Deccan, especially that of Bijapur, had reached a standard as high as that which the reign of Akbar had brought about in the North.

The weakness of the later Deccan states sprang from the same source which had been responsible for the downfall of the parent Bahmani kingdom, the unceasing friction between the native-born Deccani nobles and those of foreign origin, in their home affairs; and the fact that, when at war with each other, the Deccani kings did not hesitate to seek assistance from their mighty southern Hindu neighbour, the Raya of Vijayanagar.

As a natural result of these frequent demands for intervention, the Rayas began to look upon themselves, and indeed to a large extent became, the arbiters of the fate of the Deccan. In 1558 the help of Rama Raja Saluva,[1] the ruler of Vijayanagar, was sought by Ali Adil Shah I., who was at war with his neighbour, Hussein Nizam Shah of Ahmednagar, and the allies jointly invaded the Nizam Shahi kingdom and besieged Ahmednagar. Rama Raja, however, made a serious mistake by commanding his soldiers to desecrate the mosques of the cities they passed through. This action on his part brought about a complete revulsion of feeling, and caused Ali Adil Shah to conclude immediate peace with his enemy, and to return to his own country.

From that moment onwards Ali Adil Shah, recognising the necessity for unity, worked unceasingly for the conclusion of a league of all the Deccan states against the empire of Vijayanagar, and, in due course, succeeded in bringing about a complete reconciliation between himself and the King of Ahmednagar. To strengthen the bonds of friendship he bestowed the hand of his sister upon Hussein Nizam Shah's heir, and was himself affianced to the beautiful daughter of his late enemy, known to history as the famous Chand Bibi.

The Kings of Bidar and Golconda joined the confederacy and, proclaiming a *Jehad*, the allied sovereigns at the head of their troops invaded the territories of Vijayanagar.

On December 26, 1564, the great battle was fought on the banks of the river Krishna against an immensely superior force personally commanded by Rama Raja, and ended for the allied troops in the victory of Talikota, one of the most decisive in Indian history.

The Raja of Vijayanagar and his brother Venkatadri were both killed in the fight, and the Raja's head was sent

[1] The nominal sovereign of Vijayanagar was at this period Sada Siva, nephew of Krishna Deva Raya and of his successor Achyuta, but all real power in the state had been usurped by Rama Raja Saluva, son of Krishna Deva's former minister, Saluva Timma.

in triumph to Ahmednagar, whilst the allies continued their progress to the enemy capital.

The proud City of Victory was ravaged both by fire and by sword, her palaces were razed to the ground, her temples and idols ruthlessly destroyed. Tirumala,[1] the Raja's only remaining brother, fled to the South and raised the banner of his sovereign over the fortress of Penikonda, but the power of Vijayanagar was for ever broken and her southern vassals, the Nayak of Madura, the Wadiyar or Lord of Mysore, and the Rajas of Travancore and Cochin, all proclaimed their independence. Within a few months of the battle of Talikota Hussein Nizam Shah of Ahmednagar died and was succeeded by his eldest son Murtaza.

In 1586 this ruler's sovereignty was threatened by his younger brother Prince Burhan, but the nobles, both Deccani and foreign, of the Ahmednagar kingdom buried their feuds for the time and, rallying round their sovereign, frustrated Burhan's attempt to seize the throne.

Realising the hopelessness of his position he fled to the Moghul court and appealed to the Emperor to conclude an alliance with him. At that time, however, Akbar's attention was centred upon the North-west Frontier and, though he received the prince cordially, he limited his assistance to granting him an estate near the Deccan border and to instructing the local imperial officials to give him all the support that was in their power.

Two years later Murtaza Nizam Shah, who had meanwhile become insane, was murdered by his son Miran Hussein, who usurped the throne and appointed as his Wazir the actual instigator of the crime, one of the foreign nobles, a Persian named Mirza Khan.

The new monarch, however, proved to have a personality of his own and to be unwilling to allow his minister to rule his kingdom for him, with the result that the Wazir brought about his assassination within a year and placed the infant son of the fugitive Burhan, who had, subsequent to his father's flight been confined in a fortress by his uncle Murtaza, on the throne.

The slumbering hatred existing always between the foreign and Deccani parties awoke once more and Jamal Khan, the head of the Deccani faction, led an attack upon the palace and, capturing the Wazir, put him to death.

[1] In the year 1570 Sada Siva Raya was deposed by Tirumala, who usurped the throne, thus founding the last dynasty, that of the Rayas of Chandragiri.

The child Ismail was allowed to remain on the throne with Jamal Khan as his Wazir.

Burhan, who not unnaturally felt his claim to the throne of Ahmednagar to be superior to that of his son, appealed to Akbar and, having been promised the Emperor's moral support, returned forthwith to the Deccan. The foreign nobles of the Nizam Shahi court, exulting in this opportunity to wreak vengeance upon Jamal Khan, all flocked to Burhan's standard, and he received substantial help from Ibrahim Adil Shah of Bijapur, who sent an army to his assistance.

In the year 1591, having overcome all opposition, Burhan made his triumphal entry into the city of Ahmednagar and ascended the throne with the title of Burhan Nizam Shah II.

The fact that the ruler of Ahmednagar was to a certain extent his nominee and ally greatly facilitated matters for Akbar when, two years later, he commenced to take definite steps towards incorporating the kingdoms of the Deccan into his imperial system.

The prelude was the despatch of special missions by the Emperor to the court of each of the four Deccan kings, with letters inviting them to accept his suzerainty and carrying the customary ceremonial gifts.

Khandesh accepts imperial suzerainty.

A fifth mission, headed by no less a person than Faizi, was sent to Burhanpur, the capital of Malik Raja Ali Khan Farukhi, king of the independent Musulman state of Khandesh, which small kingdom had been founded in the year 1399 by a man named Malik Raja Farukhi, originally a cavalry trooper in the army of Firoz Shah Tughlak. Not sufficiently important to draw upon itself the attention of its powerful neighbours, or strong enough to take part in their constant quarrels, Khandesh, wisely and benevolently ruled by a succession of kings, had become prosperous ; her capital had developed not only into one of the most beautiful cities, but also into one of the greatest centres of culture in the whole of Western India.

Khandesh was of immense strategical importance to Akbar ; the main route to the Deccan passed through the territories of this little kingdom, which included within its frontiers the practically impregnable fortress of Asirgarh.

Faizi succeeded completely in his mission. Raja Ali Khan realised that his acceptance of the Emperor's suzerainty would preserve the integrity of his kingdom against any possible attacks by the Deccan states.

Everything augured well until the death in 1595 of Burhan Nizam Shah of Ahmednagar destroyed for the

time all hope of a peaceful solution to the problem of federation.

Burhan Nizam Shah was succeeded on the throne by his second son Ibrahim, who, a few months after his accession, entered upon a war with Bijapur and was slain in battle.

This event was followed by a period of anarchy at Ahmednagar, during which Mia Manju, the late king's Wazir, intent on maintaining his own influence at all costs, placed Ahmed, the infant son of an impostor named Shaikh Tahir, on the throne.

In retaliation, Yeklas Khan, the leader of the foreign party in the state, instigated a revolution, and picking up a beggar boy named Moti in the streets of Ahmednagar, affirmed that he was the son of Ibrahim and proclaimed him King. In his dangerous predicament Mia Manju made a last desperate bid to maintain himself in power by appealing to Prince Murad, Akbar's second son, who was acting as his father's Viceroy in Gujarat, to send troops to his assistance.

The Emperor had appointed his son to this important post in the hope that serious responsibility would prove the safest antidote to his foolish and vicious tendencies, but when Mia Manju's request for help reached him, Akbar considered it too great a risk to entrust Prince Murad with the sole command of so difficult a campaign and appointed the Khan Khanan to assist him. Whilst engaged upon their march to the Deccan, the frontier of which they had just crossed, news reached them of another political upheaval at Ahmednagar in which both Yeklas Khan and Mia Manju had been overthrown, and Bahadur, infant son of Ibrahim Nizam Shah, the rightful heir, proclaimed King under the regency of his great-aunt, Chand Bibi, the Queen Dowager of Bijapur.

Moghuls invade the Deccan. Siege of Ahmednagar.

Prince Murad continued his advance to Ahmednagar in spite of this intelligence and, at the gates of the city, peremptorily called upon the Queen Regent to surrender, and met with instantaneous refusal.

Chand Bibi, one of the noblest figures in the history of India, was by nature gentle, and possessed of truly feminine charm, but, when roused to anger, could show dauntless courage and resolution. Inspired by her fine qualities as a leader, the nobles of the kingdom, both native and foreign, resolved to bury their feuds for the moment, and, rallying round her and their infant sovereign, swore to defend them by all means in their power.

Prince Murad's various attempts to capture the city having

failed, he ordered a siege and the laying of mines. His engineers placed gunpowder in three different places beneath the walls of the fortress, the discovery of which measure caused a momentary panic amongst the troops of the garrison.

The heroic Queen, on hearing of this fresh menace, herself appeared at the post of danger, clad in armour, and with her own hands performed the perilous task of removing the powder from one of the mines.

The other two exploded and caused a breach in the walls, but as dusk was then falling, the Moghul commander delayed the attack until the next morning.

Chand Bibi never lost heart ; all night long she remained on the ramparts, moving amongst the soldiers, praising and encouraging them in turn, and when, at dawn, Prince Murad in person appeared to direct the assault he found the breach in the walls caused by the exploding of the mines had been completely repaired.

The heroism displayed by the Queen in her hour of greatest need was not lost upon Prince Murad, who, when free from the influence of drink, was by nature warm-hearted and chivalrous.

He commanded a public durbar to be held and on this occasion solemnly conferred upon Chand Bibi the title of Sultana, otherwise Queen in her own right, and immediately followed up this gracious act by sending an envoy into the fortress with proposals for peace.

Temporary settlement with Ahmednagar.

The treaty, which was quickly drawn up, was favourable to both signatories ; by its terms the child Bahadur was recognised King of Ahmednagar, with the Queen Dowager as Regent retaining her entire independence in all internal affairs, but fully acknowledging the suzerainty of the Emperor Akbar.

The harmony between the Ahmednagar nobles ceased, as had always been the case, as soon as the common danger had been averted. One of the leaders of the foreign party, an Abyssinian named Abhang Khan, revolted against the Queen and, casting aside the treaty with the Emperor, invaded Berar in the year 1599.

Akbar, his patience now fully exhausted, determined to employ drastic measures with which to put an end to the constantly recurring lawlessness at Ahmednagar.

Prince Murad, who had engaged in a violent quarrel with the Khan Khanan, was recalled in 1597, and his younger brother Danyal, accompanied by Abul Fazl, was sent to replace him. Prince Murad's removal from his post as

commander-in-chief was followed two years later by his death. He succumbed to an attack of delirium tremens at Shahpur.

Second siege and fall of Ahmednagar.

Early in 1600 the Moghul army reached Ahmednagar and the city was once more invested. Chand Bibi displayed all her previous heroism, but it could not avail against the danger of starvation which threatened the intrepid garrison after a siege of four months' duration.

Abul Fazl, to whom the Emperor had granted full powers, did not desire to enforce harsh terms upon the brave Queen. He therefore sent an envoy to her with the proposal that she should relinquish the city of Ahmednagar to the Emperor, and should retire with the child king to the strong fortress of Junnar, which should henceforth become the capital of the Nizam Shahi kingdom. These conditions were considered by the Queen far more generous than any she had been led to expect, and she immediately summoned a council composed of the leading nobles, native and foreign, and eloquently urged their acceptance.

Murder of Chand Bibi.

Amongst those present in the hall of audience was a eunuch named Hamid Khan, who nursed a grievance against the Queen. On hearing her plead in favour of the terms offered he rushed out to where the troops were quartered, exclaiming that Chand Bibi was in league with their enemies and willing to deliver them to the Moghuls. The soldiers, demoralised by the hardships of the long siege, forced their way into the palace, and, deaf to all appeal, put the valiant Queen, to whose wisdom, courage and loyalty they owed so much, mercilessly to death.

Annexation of Ahmednagar to the empire.

Chand Bibi's tragic end spelt the death-knell of the stronghold she had so bravely defended. On August 19, 1600, Ahmednagar was stormed by the imperial army, the boy sovereign was seized and sent as a state prisoner to the fortress of Gwalior, and his kingdom proclaimed a province of the Moghul Empire.

Akbar's position in spite of this success was still a very complex one, for a grave situation had meanwhile arisen in the neighbouring territory of Khandesh.

Revolt of Khandesh. Siege of Asirgarh.

Whilst serving in the imperial army against Ahmednagar in the campaign of 1597, the Emperor's faithful vassal Raja Ali Khan Farukhi had fallen in battle, and his son Miran Bahadur, who succeeded him, was not disposed to fulfil the obligations his father had entered upon with the Moghul Empire. He first attempted to win over Abul Fazl, whose sister was married to his younger brother, by offering him a

bribe. This method having, needless to say, failed, he revolted openly and, evacuating his capital Burhanpur, retired with all his available troops to the fortress of Asirgarh.

Directly the news reached him of Miran Bahadur's violation of the treaty made by his father, the Emperor realised that since the success of his policy in the Deccan depended so largely, owing to its strategic position, on the friendship, or failing that, on the subjugation of Khandesh, his presence in the new theatre of war was necessary ; and he therefore lost no time in assuming personal command of the troops destined for that district.

Akbar and his army occupied Burhanpur, which offered no resistance, on March 31, 1600, and after leaving sufficient troops behind to garrison the city, they continued their march until, on April 8, they reached the gates of the fortress of Asirgarh.

Situated on the highest point of a precipitous rock, nine hundred feet above the plain, Asirgarh was, with the possible exception of Devagiri and Gwalior, the greatest stronghold in India. It was stocked with vast supplies of food and well provided with water from numerous reservoirs within its walls, and it possessed, besides, approximately 1000 guns of great and small calibre, ready for action in its defence.

Akbar's military knowledge made it clear to him that it would be impossible to take a place so impregnable either by storm or by the methods of an ordinary siege ; he resorted therefore to the only other measure, that of enforcing a blockade so stringent as completely to hem in the fortress, keeping it besides under fire unceasingly by day and by night.

Fall of Asirgarh. Annexation of Khandesh.

In spite of these terrible conditions Asirgarh held out until January 17, 1601, when a virulent outbreak of pestilence amongst the soldiers of the garrison compelled Miran Bahadur Farukhi to capitulate.[1]

The fortress, the munitions of which were still by no means exhausted, fell into Akbar's hands in its entirety, and so elated was the Emperor at his victory that he ordered a special gold coin to be struck in commemoration.

The King and his family were sent under safe escort to Gwalior, where, by command of the Emperor, they were given a residence suitable to their rank, and Khandesh was annexed to the empire. When the fortress was captured, a number of unfortunate Portuguese slaves, who had been in

[1] The view here expressed is that of the contemporary Indian historian Faizi Sirhindi ; the French Jesuit historian du Jarric attributes the surrender of the garrison to bribery on Akbar's part.

the service of the Farukhis for such a lengthy period that they had entirely forgotten both their native tongue and the tenets of their creed, fell into the hands of the victors. Akbar received them kindly and, after assuring them that they would regain their freedom, sent for Father Xavier, who had accompanied him throughout the campaign, and requested him to rebaptize them in the Catholic faith. They were then despatched to their homes in Goa under safe escort.

Submission of Bijapur and Golconda.

There now remained only two Deccan kingdoms, those of Bijapur and of Golconda, which did not form part of the imperial system, and the monarchs in each case realised that their only safety lay in being admitted to it at the earliest possible moment. Special embassies from both courts were sent to the Emperor's headquarters carrying valuable gifts as offerings, and Ibrahim Adil Shah of Bijapur begged Akbar to be allowed also to bestow the hand of his daughter on Prince Danyal.

Akbar warmly welcomed an alliance which, he had every reason to hope, would further his policy of union with the Deccan as successfully as it had in Rajputana.

The Emperor, on the occasion of the marriage, created Prince Danyal Viceroy of the Deccan, Berar, Malwa, Gujarat and Khandesh and altered the name of this province to Dandesh in his son's honour.

Abul Fazl was left in the Deccan for the time being to be of assistance to the prince, and Akbar returned to the north at the head of his victorious army.

During this long march back to Agra, which had now become his capital, it would seem that the Emperor was seized with a sudden longing to visit once more Fathpur Sikri, the great city which he had founded and which had been entirely deserted for over six years.

Akbar's return to the north.

This city, in which Musulman and Hindu architecture mingled in strange and yet beautiful harmony, was, to the Emperor's idealistic mind, the embodiment of his great dream of unity, and as though to give expression to the thoughts which overwhelmed him, he, after causing an inscription to be engraved on the Buland Darwaza or Lofty Portal of the Great Mosque, commemorating his victories in the Deccan, added as a concluding line the words of Christ : " So said Jesus, on whom be peace ! the world is a bridge ; pass over it but build no house upon it ".

The concluding years of the great monarch's life were undoubtedly tinged with sadness and with a presentiment of tragedy.

Fathpur Sikri, created by him in the full strength and confidence of his youth, was the miniature of the vast empire which he had founded in the course of his long and prosperous reign, and, as he felt his physical powers waning, the conviction forced itself upon his mind that the great edifice of state which he had called into being would be undermined and eventually destroyed by his successor.

His fervent prayer for a son in whose veins the blood of Musulman and Hindu would mingle had been granted, but the great purpose of his life, that this son should preserve the unity of the two races, seemed at that very moment doomed to disappointment.

Revolt of Prince Salim.

As he approached Agra at the head of his troops a messenger rode up bringing him the crushing news that his son Prince Salim had proclaimed himself King at Allahabad and was making preparations to march upon his father's capital at the head of 30,000 men. Akbar, wishing to give Prince Salim proof of his confidence, in spite of the fact that rumours had frequently reached him insinuating that his son lent a willing ear to the disaffected nobles of the court, had, previous to his departure for the Deccan, conferred upon him the very important governorship of Ajmere, and had entrusted him with command of an expedition against Mewar, where the Sesodia Rajputs had once again risen against the Emperor. To counteract the influence of those who wished to bring about dissension between father and son, Akbar had appointed Raja Man Singh, whose sister was married to Prince Salim, his acting deputy. Unfortunately, almost immediately after the Prince had taken up his residence at Ajmere, Man Singh was recalled to his Eastern viceroyalty to quell a rebellion in Orissa ; and it was during his absence that Salim was won over by his disloyal advisers and, deserting his post, marched to Allahabad. Arrived in the city, he occupied the great fort built by Akbar in which the state treasure of Bihar was kept ; commanded new coins to be struck bearing his name, and generally assumed the dignity of an independent monarch.

At that moment he received news of the Emperor's impending return to Agra, and it is quite likely that, had the Prince been left to reflect, he would have regretted the steps he had taken, and have implored his father's pardon for his rash deed. Those, however, who had been largely instrumental in persuading Prince Salim to commit this act of insubordination, and whose great aim it was to make the breach between the Emperor and his heir irreparable, urged

that, having gone so far, it would be lamentable weakness to retract and that the Prince's great chance lay in being the first to strike. Blinded by these counsels, the Prince accepted the iniquitous advice and prepared to advance against his father's capital.

Akbar, roused not only to just anger by his son's disloyalty, but also alive to the threat to his own sovereignty, immediately on arrival at Agra massed all his available troops in the vicinity of the city and then sent a final stern summons to Salim to appear unattended at his court, and to offer his unconditional surrender.

The Prince had reached Etawah, within only seventy-three miles of Agra, when this message was brought to him, but the impression produced upon him was so great that he abandoned the advance and immediately returned to Allahabad.

The Emperor, actuated as ever by a spirit of conciliation, offered him the Viceroyalty of Bengal and Orissa, but Prince Salim, disregarding the offer entirely, continued to hold his court as ruler of Allahabad, whilst always pointedly alluding to his father as the Great King as though intending this to imply an acknowledgement of Akbar's suzerainty.

The Emperor allowed this vague state of affairs to continue for a time, but in the month of June 1602, he felt a great desire for the advice in this difficult matter of his closest friend, Abul Fazl, and also for the comfort of his companionship. He accordingly wrote to recall him from the Deccan, and in his letter gave him a full account of the position Salim had adopted. Abul Fazl's reply was to the effect that he was starting immediately for Agra, and strongly urged the Emperor to have the prince arrested, and brought a prisoner in chains to his court.

This letter was in some way intercepted and, falling into Salim's hands, roused him to a frenzy of hatred against his father's minister, who, such was his vow, should never reach Akbar's court alive.

Murder of Abul Fazl.

He bribed Bir Singh Deo Bundela, Rajah of Orchha, a bandit chief of the wild province of Bundelkhand, to lie in wait for Abul Fazl on his journey to the north and assassinate him.

Warnings of impending danger on the part of several of his officers, who were devoted to Abul Fazl, and entreaties to alter his route were not wanting, but the brave minister ignored them all and proceeded on his way protected only by a small band of Moghul soldiers.

At dawn on August 12, 1602, Abul Fazl and his escort were attacked by 500 Bundelas, clad in mail and led by Bir Singh Deo, and, though the minister's followers loyally defended their leader up to the very last, they were powerless to avert the tragic issue. Abul Fazl was mortally wounded and, almost before the breath had left his body, his head was severed from it and sent by a mounted messenger to Salim at Allahabad.

Thus died one of the greatest patriots in the history of Moghul India, who, from the time of his earliest introduction to the Emperor's court to the moment when death cut short his journey to his side, remained his truest, most devoted servant and friend.

It is scarcely necessary to deal separately with Abul Fazl's career ; it was so intimately bound up with that of Akbar, whose every thought he shared and whose ambitions he came to look upon as his own. Some amongst those who have read his two great works, the *Akbarnamah* or *Life of Akbar*, and the *Ain-i-Akbari* or *Institutes of Akbar*, may sicken of his ceaseless eulogy of his sovereign and accuse him of coming perilously near to sycophancy, but the extravagance of his language, especially to the Western ear, can be best explained by the intense love he bore his master and by his honest, unshakable belief that he was, to quote one of his own poems, " the King who had illumined India's night ".

When the fatal news reached the court of Agra, not a single one of the Emperor's most devoted friends would undertake the terrible duty of breaking it to him. Finally it was decided to resort to a custom usual at the Moghul court in case of the death of a prince of the house of Timur, when, instead of the announcement being made to the reigning Emperor by word of mouth, the *vakil* or agent of the deceased prince appeared in the sovereign's presence with a blue scarf tied round his arm.

As Akbar was eagerly awaiting the arrival of the friend from whom he had been separated for a year, his *vakil* presented himself wearing the symbol of death. Prostrate with grief, the Emperor remained alone in his apartments for twenty-four hours and, when finally a few of his most intimate friends were admitted, he greeted them with the following passionate outcry : " If Salim wished to be Emperor he might have killed me and spared Abul Fazl ".

As soon as he had recovered some measure of self-possession, Akbar gave orders for the actual perpetrator of

the crime to be relentlessly hunted down and slain, and, in addition, sent a punitive expedition under the command of Abdurrahman, the murdered man's son, to Bundelkhand.

Bir Singh Deo and his men, knowing every inch of their wild country and thoroughly versed in guerilla warfare, evaded the Moghuls time after time and, by poisoning the wells, caused heavy casualties amongst the Emperor's troops.

Bir Singh Deo was never captured but lived to found several royal houses still ruling in Bundelkhand to-day.

The Emperor's heir, the instigator of this atrocious deed, was never punished, for Akbar was in constant expectation of the demise of his youngest son Danyal, who, following the example of his deceased brother Murad, was fast drinking himself to death ; and, in spite of the cruelty of the blow dealt him by Prince Salim, Akbar felt drawn towards him in his loneliness and, with that astounding power to forgive which was born of his affection for his children, longed for his presence.

Salima Begum, the Emperor's second Moslem consort, offered her services as mediator, to which he gladly consented, and she immediately proceeded to Allahabad to use her influence to bring about a reconciliation between Prince Salim and his father.

It was in the month of April 1603 that the Emperor received news from the Begum that her difficult mission had met with complete success and that Salim, attended by a very small suite only, was accompanying her back to Agra.

It was not without serious apprehension as to the reception which awaited him on his father's part that the Prince approached the capital, but almost on the threshold of the city he was met by his grandmother, Akbar's mother, Hamida Banu Begum, whose presence entirely reassured him and who, on his arrival at Agra, lodged him in her own palace.

Temporary submission of Salim.

A few days later Salim made his formal submission to the Emperor and offered him as a tribute 770 elephants and 12,000 gold mohurs. For some moments Akbar's emotion as he gazed upon the son who had caused him such intense suffering and grief made him speechless ; then, guided by one of those sudden generous impulses which were part of his nature, he removed his own turban and, placing it upon Salim's head, embraced him warmly, thus renewing his acknowledgement of him as heir to the throne.

When a few days later the Prince was preparing to leave,

his father, anxious to give him proof that his trust in him was fully restored, proposed that Salim should now take command of the expedition against Mewar abandoned in 1599.

The Prince accepted the proposal with apparent eagerness, but with his return to Allahabad his evil associates regained their former ascendancy over him and persuaded him to remain there, repudiating the undertaking given to his father, and to assume once more his attitude of rebellion.

This fresh blow began to tell upon the Emperor's iron constitution. His cup of bitterness was filled almost to the brim as one disappointment and sorrow followed on the other in close succession.

In April 1604 Prince Danyal succumbed at Burhanpur to the results of intemperance, a few months after his marriage to the Bijapur princess, from which alliance Akbar had hoped so much.

Reports from Allahabad went from bad to worse. Prince Salim, constantly under the influence of drink and opium, was living a life of indulgence in the wildest excesses, and it was quite a common occurrence for him to order that any servant who fell into disfavour with him should be impaled or flayed alive.

Man Singh of Amber and Aziz Khan Koka, whose devotion to their sovereign never faltered, realised sadly that his health was failing and, under the circumstances, felt that the only chance in the event of his death of carrying on Akbar's policy lay in a change in the line of succession.

Their choice fell upon Prince Khusru, the eldest son of Prince Salim by his marriage with his Rajputni cousin Man Bai, the adopted sister of the Raja of Amber.

Palace intrigues.

Prince Khusru was seventeen years of age, exceptionally handsome, and had inherited the hardy constitution of his mother, which had in his case not been impaired by any kind of excess. Gifted with a fine intellect, he willingly absorbed all the culture and learning which had become an honoured tradition of the princes of the house of Timur. In character he was frank, open and generous, the exact antithesis of his father, and was greatly loved by all who knew him, both amongst the most exalted and most humble people of the realm.

He scorned the habits of most of the princes and grandees of the empire, who, possessing numerous wives, filled their harems with slave girls from Circassia and Georgia. Khusru

had one wife only, the daughter of Aziz Koka, to whom he was passionately attached and faithful throughout his life.

The young prince's claim to the throne was greatly strengthened not only by his personal attributes but by the fact that he was the nephew of the most powerful Rajput feudatory of the empire and the son-in-law of a very powerful Moslem noble at court. Further, according to Mohammedan law, the Emperor had the right to pass Salim over in the line of succession and nominate as his heir any prince of the imperial house he wished.

The wide difference in the characteristics of Salim and his son made any genuine affection or sympathy between them impossible, and Khusru's ambitious nature made him not unnaturally accessible to the constant flattery of his uncle and his father-in-law, who impressed upon him that he was destined to be the saviour of the empire.

He allowed his name to be openly put forward as that of a rival to his father, with the result that a terrible tragedy ensued. The marriage of Salim and Man Bai, though originally entered into for state reasons, had very soon become one of deep mutual affection.

The young Rajputni, to whom Salim invariably showed the best side of his nature, was able, with a woman's quick intuition, to divine the finer qualities which lay dormant under the failings and vices which were by no means unknown to her. Imbued with all the lofty instincts of her race and with the strongest sense of honour, it was to her a matter of personal disgrace that the son she had borne should rise against his father, and when her affectionate remonstrances failed to deter him from the attitude he had assumed, she felt she could no longer face a life which to her had become one of shame.

On May 16, 1604, Salim was hastily recalled from a hunting expedition with the news that his consort had poisoned herself with opium, and before he could reach her side she had breathed her last. The effect of this blow upon Prince Salim was terrible. After first refusing all food and drink he gave way to the wildest excesses in which he hoped to find forgetfulness and consolation in his grief. He came to hate Khusru, whom he considered morally responsible for his mother's death, and in this hatred were sown the seeds of further tragedy.

Akbar, weary with age and suffering, still retained the generosity and warm-heartedness of earlier days, and no sooner had he received the news of his son's tragic

bereavement than, setting aside all resentment at his fresh rebellion, he sent him a letter couched in terms of affectionate sympathy.

Salim's heart remained untouched, and finally, in the August of the same year, Akbar, in spite of growing bodily weakness, determined to use force as the only means of bringing his son to his senses.

The Empress Dowager once more asked permission to intervene in the hope of being able to bring about a peaceful solution, but this time Akbar, realising that his days were numbered, and that if his death left the question of the succession unsettled, nothing could avert a disastrous conflict between Salim and his son, gently declined her offer, and, assembling a considerable body of troops, led them towards Allahabad.

The heart of Hamida Begum, who had now reached the age of seventy-three, was filled with grief and foreboding. Torn between her affection for her son, whose glorious reign she had watched with legitimate pride, and pity for her grandson, whom in spite of his many faults she dearly loved, she felt her physical strength rapidly waning, and Akbar had advanced but a short distance on the road to Allahabad when he received news that his mother, stricken with mortal illness, begged to be allowed to look upon his face once more.

Death of Hamida Begum. Reconciliation of Akbar and Salim.

Akbar, without a moment's hesitation, rode back to Agra at highest speed, but Hamida was no longer conscious and passed away almost immediately he had reached her side.

The death of Hamida Begum brought about the reconciliation for which her gentle nature had striven. When the news reached Salim the scales fell from his eyes and he suddenly beheld himself in all his unworthiness. Filled with an intense longing to go to his father and comfort him in his grief, he called for his swiftest horse and, attended by a very small escort, rode to Agra. At first Akbar received his son in formal audience and, when all the assembled nobles had withdrawn, gave vent to the anger in his heart and reproached him in the bitterest terms for his conduct, finally ordering his guards to place him under close arrest in one of the apartments of the palace.

After twenty-four hours the Emperor's greatness and affection rose above all other feelings and he ordered Prince Salim's release. From that moment the reconciliation between father and son became complete, a development which was viewed with consternation and grave misgivings by Man

Singh and the Khan-i-Azam, who were still intent on the succession of Khusru.

There were now two violently hostile factions at the imperial court, the one led by the Raja of Amber and the Khan-i-Azam, supporting the claims of Khusru, the other composed of all the more orthodox Moslems who wished to see Prince Salim ascend the throne.

At this critical moment in September 1605, Akbar was attacked by dysentery, and it soon became obvious to those about him that the Emperor's strength would not be able to combat the disease. Incapable of wielding the affairs of state from his sick-bed, Akbar found it necessary to appoint a Regent, and the choice fell upon the Khan-i-Azam.

This appointment gave both the Khan-i-Azam and Man Singh the opportunity they sought, and they promptly filled all the important state departments with men who thought as they did. Their plan was to arrest Prince Salim on the occasion of his next visit to his father and to keep him a prisoner until Akbar's death and until Prince Khusru had been proclaimed Emperor.

All arrangements were completed, and Prince Salim, coming by boat on the Jumna to see his father, was to be seized as he landed at the water-gate of the fort, but Mirza Zia-ul-Mulk Kazvini, a Moslem noble who was in the conspiracy, betrayed his confederates at the last moment, and, appearing on the walls, warned him of the impending danger.

The Emperor's condition was gradually becoming worse, and Man Singh and Aziz Koka determined upon a last desperate effort in favour of Khusru.

In his capacity as Regent of the empire, the Khan-i-Azam convoked an assembly of all the great nobles of the realm and, addressing them in an impassioned speech, declared Prince Salim unfit to rule, adding that the Mohammedan law permitted them to set him aside in favour of Prince Khusru, the only scion of the house of Timur worthy to succeed the glorious Akbar.

Scarcely had these words been spoken than Syed Khan, a member of the famous Moghul clan of the Syeds of Barha, sprang to his feet, and exclaimed that the succession of Khusru, though possibly valid according to Koranic law, was in direct violation of the house law of the Timurids, which recognised Salim as the only legal heir to the throne. Chief after chief echoed this opinion, and finally there was no way open to the Khan-i-Azam and Man Singh but to bow to the will of the majority.

On the night of October 16, 1605, it was evident that the Emperor was sinking fast and a summons was sent to Prince Salim to hasten to his father's bedside. As he entered the apartment in which Akbar lay, the dying sovereign opened his eyes and made a sign to his attendants to place the imperial turban upon his son's head and to gird the scimitar to his side.

Death of Akbar.

Salim, overcome with grief and remorse, threw himself, passionately weeping, at the foot of the couch and implored his father's forgiveness for all the unhappiness he had caused him.

Several of the orthodox Moslems who were present besought the Emperor, as the end drew near, to repeat the words of the Mohammedan creed, but Akbar, true to his ideals even in the moment of death, only murmured in faint accents the word " God " and thus died as he had lived, not really belonging to any of the great faiths of mankind and yet, in a measure, a member of them all.

His mortal remains were carried on the shoulders of his son Prince Salim to the great tomb at Sikandra, a few miles from Agra, which he had himself erected and destined to be his last resting-place.

Amongst the representatives of all the different creeds who congregated at his graveside, stood, conspicuous in its simplicity, the black-robed figure of the Jesuit priest, Father Xavier, who had always remained his devoted friend.

CHAPTER III

JEHANGIR AND NUR JEHAN, A.D. 1605–1627

Accession of Jehangir.

DURING the fateful hours when the great monarch lay dying and when feelings amongst the nobles of his court were strung to the highest pitch of excitement with regard to the succession, the supporters of Prince Salim had demanded from him a solemn vow, which he agreed to take, to signalise his proclamation as Emperor by restoring Islam as the state religion of the empire.

When, therefore, on October 24, one week after his father's death, he was publicly enthroned in the Diwan-i-Am of the palace at Agra, he assumed the title of Nur-ud-Din Mohammed Jehangir Badshah Ghazi ; and as Nur-ud-Din is, in other words, Light of the Mohammedan Faith, whilst Ghazi is one who fights in a Holy War, he left no further doubt in the minds of his subjects that India was once again under the rule of an orthodox Moslem sovereign.

Jehangir, which henceforth is the name under which the new monarch was known, signifies World Taker.

In spite of the fact that Akbar's " Divine Faith " became extinct, his son, in many respects, sought to perpetuate the spirit of tolerance upon which it had been built.

On the Moslem Sabbath the Emperor Jehangir proceeded in state to the mosque, and the festival of *Bakr Id* and all other Mohammedan feasts and fasts were duly observed ; but side by side with these observances, the sovereign kept to the Solar calendar of the Zoroastrians introduced by his father ; and likewise the *Dasahra*, the great military festival of the Hindus which commemorates the triumphant return of Rama and Sita from Ceylon, continued to be celebrated with the utmost magnificence at the imperial court, Jehangir joining with his Rajput feudatories in all the customary rites.

The house of Timur is best described at this stage as a truly national Indian dynasty ruled over by an orthodox Mohammedan, in whose veins, however, there flowed the blood of a Rajput mother bringing with it sympathy and reverence for the faith to which she belonged.

Acting under the advice of Murtaza Khan, to whose influence his accession had been partly due, the Emperor Jehangir's first public act was to proclaim a general amnesty for all those nobles of the court who had supported his son Khusru's claim.

The result of this generous measure was to secure for the new sovereign the loyal adherence both of Man Singh of Amber and the Khan-i-Azam, but, in proffering his allegiance to the Emperor, who confirmed him as Viceroy of Bengal and Orissa, Man Singh made it conditional upon the granting of a free pardon to Prince Khusru.

Jehangir unhesitatingly agreed to this stipulation; a summons was sent to the young prince, who was led to the steps of the throne by the Raja of Amber, and the Emperor, embracing his son warmly, gave him a lakh of rupees, and told him that a splendid mansion in the city of Agra would henceforth be placed at his disposal.

Mankind has always been the same from time immemorial to the present day. There are, and ever have been, but very few human beings who can permanently bury the bitterness of disappointed hopes and of ambitions left unsatisfied.

Prince Khusru, once Man Singh had left for Bengal and his moderating influence had been removed, felt an awakening of all the dormant antagonism against his father, which had been so persistently fostered by a large section of the nobles, as well as by many of the citizens of Agra, who had, only a short time before, whenever he appeared in public, acclaimed him as their sovereign.

The Emperor on his part, who, in his hour of triumph had allowed himself to be influenced by the more generous impulses for reconciliation with his son, now began to dwell once more upon the tragic end of Man Bai, and, being unable to dissociate his son from her untimely death, felt his old resentment assert itself afresh.

A few weeks after the affectionate meeting between father and son had taken place in the Diwan-i-Khas, Prince Khusru was arrested by the Emperor's orders and removed to the fort of Agra, where he received honourable treatment as a prisoner of state.

Rebellion of Prince Khusru.

From that moment Khusru's mind was definitely made up to seize upon the first possible opportunity to raise the flag of rebellion against his father.

This opportunity came on April 6, 1606, when the Prince was given permission to undertake a pilgrimage to Akbar's tomb at Sikandra. He left Agra under the escort of 350 horsemen, all of whom he had succeeded in winning over to his cause, and as soon as they had got beyond the gates of the capital, they, led by the Prince, turned their horses' heads towards the Punjab and, without encountering any obstacles, reached the sacred Hindu city of Mathura. Here Hussein Beg Badakshi, an imperial commander of 300 horse, came over to their side and, with this reinforcement, they proceeded to invade the Punjab.

The very great popularity which Khusru enjoyed, especially with the masses, made his progress at first one of unbroken triumph, and within a few days of his invasion of the Punjab, no less than 12,000 of the hardy Jat peasantry had joined his standard.

Abdurrahim, Diwan of Lahore, one of the most powerful local imperial officials, who was on his way to Agra, turned back at Narela and offered his allegiance to the rebel Prince.

The Sikh faith.

From Narela the Prince continued his advance to the small town of Tarn Taran, fourteen miles from Amritsar, where Arjun Mal, the Guru or High Priest of the Sikhs, dwelt, as he wished to invoke his blessing. Sikhism, a creed founded between the years 1460 and 1538 by Nanak, the son of a village shopkeeper in the Punjab, can best be described as an attempt at a compromise between Hinduism and Islam. It condemned idolatry, which made the more liberal-minded Musulmans of the Punjab regard it with sympathy ; and it declared all men to be brothers, which was in direct opposition to the Hindu caste system, and thus gained many converts from amongst the Jat peasants of the province, who, being the descendants of the ancient Scythian invaders, occupied, under the caste system, only the rank of Sudras. Akbar's reign of religious tolerance had brought prosperity to the Sikhs, and they had been able, without risk of interference, to compile their Sacred Book, the *Adi Granth*.

Arjun Mal, the fifth Guru in direct succession to the founder of the faith, Nanak, dwelt in almost regal state at Tarn Taran, sometimes moving to the neighbouring city of Amritsar, which had become the Sikh religious capital.

Prince Khusru was no stranger to the Guru, whose acquaintance he had made previous to the death of the Emperor Akbar,[1] and he now appealed to him to give him his blessing and also to assist him with funds, as far as lay in his power, with which to carry on the campaign, which he hoped would establish his claim to the sovereignty. The Guru had no feelings of animosity towards the Emperor Jehangir, but, on the other hand, the personality of the young prince exercised such a strong charm upon him that he acceded to his request and, imprinting the *tika* or mark of sovereignty on Khusru's brow, solemnly blessed his undertaking.

Khusru, with his hopes greatly raised, continued his advance towards the city of Lahore, where, however, he found Dilawar Khan, Viceroy of the Punjab, unshakable in his loyalty to the Emperor Jehangir, and absolutely determined to refuse the rebels admittance to the city.

In numbers Khusru's troops greatly surpassed those of Dilawar Khan, but the soldiers under the viceroy were thoroughly trained and supported by artillery, whereas the Prince's followers, with the exception of the Turki cavalry of Hussein Beg Badakshi, were principally raw peasants whose only fighting asset was their personal courage.

Khusru, who in his impetuosity did not realise that to attempt a siege without guns was a forlorn hope, instantly gave orders for the city to be closely invested, and for nine days the rebels surrounded the walls of Lahore without being able to achieve anything ; and then on April 24 the Prince received news that an imperial army of considerable strength under the Emperor's personal command was advancing to attack them.

Khusru immediately divided his troops, leaving some to watch the garrison of Lahore whilst he himself, at the head of the main army, 10,000 strong, marched to the plain of Bhaironwal, where he came into contact with the advance guard of his father's forces led by Murtaza Khan. Jehangir was obviously still reluctant to take extreme measures and sent a trusted officer to his son, under a flag of truce, with instructions to guarantee his (Khusru's) safety and generous treatment if he capitulated.

Defeat and capture of Khusru.

Khusru, however, his dreams of sovereignty greatly encouraged by the numbers who had flocked to his standard, and still nursing bitter feelings of resentment towards his

[1] Akbar, in his study of all religions, had not neglected Sikhism, and the Guru had been an honoured guest at his court.

father, would not be shaken in his resolve, and on the following day, the 25th, Murtaza Khan proceeded to the attack. The Turki horsemen and the Jat levies fought with desperate courage and inflicted heavy losses upon the enemy, but the issue was a foregone conclusion. Khusru's forces were completely routed and the Prince, attended only by Abdurrahim, Hussein Beg and a few faithful officers, fled towards the Afghan frontier, the wild plan having taken possession of his mind to capture the city of Kabul and to make use of it as a base against Hindustan as his ancestor Babur had done.

A few hours saw the collapse of all his hopes for, on April 27, as the Prince and his diminutive following were about to cross the river Chenab at Sodharah, they were surprised and all captured by the imperial troops.

On May 1 the Prince and his fellow-captives were brought before the Emperor at Lahore ; all pretence at honourable treatment of the prisoners had been abandoned.

Khusru, handcuffed as though a common felon, was led into the hall where Jehangir was sitting in public durbar, and on his attempting to prostrate himself before the throne, was sternly rebuked and ordered to stand up.

The Emperor's character was one of strange contradictions ; when he had first received the intelligence of his son's capture he had burst into tears, but now that he stood before him helpless and penitent, Jehangir's heart turned to stone and his mind evolved the diabolical plan of punishing Khusru by making him witness the terrible sufferings of his faithful adherents.

Two long lines of sharply pointed stakes were, by the Emperor's command, driven into the ground outside the walls of Lahore, and on each of these one of the doomed rebel prisoners was impaled. The unhappy prince, handcuffed and in chains, was placed upon an elephant and led out to witness the torture and death agony of those who had so loyally fought for him and, besides, was subjected to the insults of the commander of the guards in charge of him, who told him with a sneer that he would now receive the homage of his subjects.

Prince Khusru, haunted by this terrible scene, wept unceasingly for days and, from that time onwards, the frank engaging smile which had won so many hearts never crossed his face.

Hussein Beg Badakshi was sewn up living in the skin of an ox and, placed on a donkey, paraded through the streets

of Lahore until, after twelve hours of unspeakable torment, he died of suffocation.

Jehangir's thirst for revenge seemed even then unsatisfied and he fixed upon the illustrious Sikh Guru Arjun Mal to be the final victim of his wrath.

It appears possible that, had the Emperor been left to himself, or had he allowed the counsels of the more moderate nobles at his court to prevail, he might have abstained from inflicting the supreme punishment upon the Guru, but Arjun had enemies in his own household, chief amongst these being his own brother Prithia, who had been passed over in Arjun's favour when he was elected Guru, and whose wife, a woman of bitter and vindictive character, urged him to represent the part Arjun had played in the rebellion in the blackest possible colours to the imperial authorities.

In his audience hall at Lahore the Emperor and the captive high priest met face to face, and Jehangir, addressing his prisoner, said : " Thou art a great saint, a great teacher and holy man ; thou lookest on rich and poor alike. It was therefore not proper for thee to give money to my enemy Khusru." Looking the Emperor in the eyes without a trace of fear in his own, the Guru replied : " I regard all people, whether Hindu or Musulman, rich or poor, friend or foe, without love or hate, and it is on this account that I gave thy son some money for his journey, and not because he was in opposition to thee. If I had not assisted him in his forlorn condition, and so shown some regard for the kindness of thy father the Emperor Akbar, to myself, all men would despise me for my heartlessness and ingratitude, or they would say that I was afraid of thee. This would have been unworthy of a follower of Guru Nanak, the world's Guru." [1]

The dauntless spirit displayed by the high priest roused the Emperor to fury, and he forthwith ordered the Guru's execution, and at the same time commanded that his hermitage at Tarn Taran should be confiscated together with all his other property.

Imprisonment and death of Guru Arjun Mal.

Arjun, after being subjected to the most horrible sufferings, was left to die on the bank of the river Ravi, where he had obtained permission to bathe his tortured body.

The Emperor in putting him to death had fallen back into that perilous system of persecution which, two generations later, transformed the peaceful Sikh sect into the

[1] Gokul Chand Narang, *Transformation of Sikhism*, pp. 31-41.

fanatical religious commonwealth which it remains at the present day.

The unhappy Khusru was kept a prisoner in chains and Khwaja Ghiyas-ud-Din Kazvini, a leading noble of the court, and a eunuch named Itibar Khan were made responsible for his safe custody.

Jehangir, merciless in his treatment of the ill-fated rebels, now showered rewards of the most lavish nature upon those who had been faithful to him.

Thus Murtaza Khan received Bhaironwal, the scene of his recent victory, as an additional *jagir*, and the name of the town was in his honour altered to Faridabad, which was derived from his personal name Shaikh Farid Bokhari. Dilawar Khan, the Viceroy of the Punjab, was nominated a commander of 2000.

To all appearance the Emperor, thanks to the loyalty of the great majority of the nobles and high officials of the empire, was firmly established on the throne, but there were also many, especially among the elder statesmen of the imperial court, both Hindu and Musulman, who had witnessed Akbar's glorious reign and had helped him to build up the new India, who were horrified at his son's cruelty to his victims and at the mental torture he had inflicted upon Prince Khusru in forcing him to be a spectator of these agonies.

They were also deeply angered by Jehangir's action in summoning to court Bir Singh Deo of Orchha, the actual murderer of Abul Fazl, whom he not only raised to the rank of commander of 3000 but also placed on the throne of Orchha, passing over the rightful heir, his elder brother Ram Chand Bundela.

The dignity of commander of 3000 made of Bir Singh Deo one of the leading *Mansabdars* of the empire and brought him frequently into contact with some of his victim's closest friends, who, very naturally, looked upon the perpetrator of this foul deed with the utmost abhorrence.

Policy of the Emperor.

The earliest results of the Emperor's policy were seen in the withdrawal to his own country of Rai Rai Singh of Bikanir, where he adopted an attitude of passive resistance ; and in the open revolt of Ram Chand Bundela, who, as a matter of course, strongly resented being supplanted by his younger brother.

Jehangir eventually succeeded in persuading the Raja of Bikanir to acknowledge him again as suzerain, and in

conciliating Ram Chand by accepting his daughter's hand in marriage.

So as not to appear to favour one side more than another, he created Abul Fazl's eldest son, Abdurrahman, a commander of 2000 with the name of Afzul Khan as title of nobility, but throughout his reign he continued actively to support Bir Singh Deo, who, combining in his person strength, ability and ruthlessness, gradually extended his rule over the entire province of Bundelkhand and became one of the most powerful feudatories of the empire.

In the month of March 1607 peace reigned throughout the Indian Empire, and Jehangir thought the moment propitious to leave Lahore and visit Kabul and his Afghan dominions. Kuli Khan, an officer of high degree, upon whom the Emperor knew he could absolutely rely, was left in charge at Lahore and, to prevent any possible revival in favour of Prince Khusru during his own absence from Hindustan, the Emperor decided that his son should accompany him on his journey.

Jehangir selected for his residence at Kabul one of the numerous gardens of the city known as the Shahrara Garden, and here it was that, in answer to the repeated appeals of the ladies of his harem, he gave orders for the removal of Khusru's fetters and allowed him to walk about in the garden each day in comparative freedom.

Khusru's plot against the Emperor.

A tragic fate, however, seemed to dog the relations of father and son and no sooner did either show signs of desiring a better understanding than the other assumed an irreconcilable attitude. This is what happened at Kabul, when Jehangir, realising that his sovereignty was no longer threatened, allowed a warmer feeling towards Khusru to rise to the surface. The Prince, in whose memory the terrible sufferings of his friends lived as vividly as ever, remained impervious to his father's advances ; in fact he received them in a mood of extreme sullenness which eventually culminated in the fixed resolve to avenge these friends and to satisfy his personal ambitions at the cost of the Emperor's life. Opportunity was not wanting to favour the prince's designs. He completely won over by his charm of manner a young noble named Nur-ud-Din, the son of Khwaja Ghiyas-ud-Din Kazvini who was one of those appointed to guard him ; he also succeeded in enlisting the support of the eunuch Itibar Khan, chief of his custodians, and gradually a conspiracy was formed which included, besides the two already mentioned, Fathullah Khan, son of Hakim Abul Fath, Akbar's

former general, and Sharif Khan, brother of Jehangir's early love, Mihr-un-Nisa. The plotters succeeded in enrolling as their confederates 400 of the younger nobles who formed part of the Emperor's suite in Kabul, and their plan was to assassinate Jehangir in the course of his return journey to India and then, seizing the reins of government, to proclaim Prince Khusru Emperor. Jehangir had hardly started for Agra when, through the treachery of one of the conspirators, the whole plot was revealed to Khwaja Wais, principal officer to Khusru's younger brother Prince Khurram, who promptly informed the Emperor of the designs upon his life.

Khusru's plot betrayed.

Sharif Khan, Nur-ud-Din and Itibar Khan were immediately arrested, the last being found in possession of a number of letters and documents, which revealed the names of the conspirators and also gave details of the plot. Nur-ud-Din, the two confederates we have just mentioned, and a noble named Bedagh Turkoman who had joined their ranks, were executed, but the remainder of the guilty were spared by one of those sudden generous impulses to which Jehangir's complex nature was liable.

Listening to the appeal for mercy made on their behalf by one of his most loyal officers, Salabat Khan by name, the Emperor decided to destroy the letters found on Itibar Khan unread, and thus he remained in ignorance of the majority of those who had plotted against him. The most difficult problem for Jehangir was the nature of the treatment to be meted out to Prince Khusru, who had, for the second time, been discovered actively conspiring to bring about his father's overthrow and death.

The Emperor could not bring himself to contemplate the carrying out of capital punishment upon his son, and it is more than likely that, left to himself, he would have been satisfied to keep him in close imprisonment. One of the most powerful nobles of the court, however, the subsequently famous Mahabat Khan, persuaded Jehangir to take recourse to the barbarous punishment of having the Prince blinded, and justified this cruel advice by telling the Emperor that Khusru's popularity was such that imprisonment only would not prevent the continuance of his influence or render him harmless.

Jehangir only half-heartedly consented to the carrying out of this terrible sentence by Mahabat in person, and when, in March 1608, he, the luckless prince and all the imperial suite reached Agra, his remorse was such that he instantly sent for a skilled Persian physician and implored him to use

every possible means to restore his son's sight. The doctor immediately proceeded to the apartments in the palace occupied by the Prince, and found that though one eye had been definitely injured it was possible, to the Emperor's great relief, completely to restore the sight of the other.

But for certain changes in the Deccan, which will be dealt with later, the three years 1608–1611 passed without disturbance for the empire.

Jehangir and Mihr-un-Nisa.

In March 1611 came the great turning-point in the life and reign of Jehangir ; it was then that he suddenly became obsessed with a longing to behold once again and to win at whatsoever cost the woman he had never ceased to love and whose image, her beauty undimmed even after the lapse of years, still dwelt in his memory.

Mihr-un-Nisa, the daughter of Ghiyas Beg, whom during his father's reign and in his early youth he had seen for a brief moment in the palace garden at Agra, had spent the time between that meeting up to the year 1607 in peace and contentment. After her marriage to Ali Kuli Beg she had lived happily with her husband on his *jagir* near Burdwan in Bengal and had, in due course, borne him a daughter.

On March 30, 1607, a peremptory summons came to Ali Kuli to attend at the camp of the Emperor Jehangir's foster-brother Kutub-ud-Din Koka, who was now Viceroy of Bengal in place of Man Singh, and who had arrived in the vicinity of Burdwan.

Ali Kuli's aged mother, who dwelt under her son's roof, seemed filled with forebodings of disaster as she fastened his helmet on his head, but Ali Kuli himself was free from any suspicion and rode to the camp attended only by two grooms.

Jehangir's precise instructions to his foster-brother are not known, but everything leads to the assumption that he was told to offer Ali Kuli some high appointment in the imperial service on condition that he consented to divorce his wife and thus give the Emperor the opportunity to make her his consort. As the Persian approached the camp Kutub-ud-Din rode forward to meet him and simultaneously the viceregal soldiers prepared to encircle him as though to make him their prisoner.

Ali Kuli, scenting danger, instantly grasped his sword, whereupon the viceroy, anxious to avoid bloodshed, gave them the signal with his riding-whip to withdraw. The troops, evidently mistaking Kutub-ud-Din's signal, tightened their circle still more closely, and Ali Kuli, now fully convinced that his life was at stake, drew his sword and,

charging full at the viceroy, dealt him a mortal blow. Kutub-ud-Din fell to the ground and with his dying breath called upon his followers to avenge him, and a few moments later Ali Kuli, who had defended himself with desperate courage, was fatally wounded. Immediately afterwards a body of imperial troops led by Ghiasa, the deceased viceroy's half-brother, proceeded to Ali Kuli's *jagir* and arrested Mihr-un-Nisa and her daughter Ladili, who were sent to Agra. Here the unhappy widow sought the protection of Ruquayyah Sultan Begum, her mother's friend, who took pity upon her and appointed her one of her ladies-in-waiting. When Jehangir returned from Kabul he found her thus installed and saw that with the passing of time (Mihr-un-Nisa had then attained her thirty-fourth year) she had not lost any of the beauty and charm of her early girlhood.

He also realised that the indomitable spirit of the young maiden who had punished Prince Salim's lack of courtesy by setting free his pigeons still lived in the woman of maturer age. Convinced within her mind that the moral responsibility for her husband's death lay at the Emperor's door, she rebuffed all his advances with undisguised hostility; and Jehangir's despotic temperament, which had gained strength from the fact that his sovereignty brought him obedience to every wish almost before it was uttered, was intensely angered by her attitude and more than ever determined to bend her will to his.

Instead of receiving the large pension from the treasury to which Mihr-un-Nisa, as widow of a *Mansabdar* of the empire, was entitled, the Emperor refused to allow it to be paid to her, but this mean-spirited act on Jehangir's part left her quite unperturbed, and she immediately sought to earn her living by a very skilled type of needlework for which she had great aptitude and also by the manufacture of attar of roses, a beautiful perfume the ingredients of which had originally been discovered by her mother Azizan Bibi. The proud and dignified attitude of Mihr-un-Nisa gradually brought the Emperor to the realisation of his own shortcomings and he now made it his custom, on his daily visits to Ruquayyah Sultan Begum, to address a few words in a most respectful manner to her lady-in-waiting.

Soon afterwards her pension was restored to her and Jehangir, whose love for her grew more and more in intensity, began to woo her in a spirit of humility which did not leave her unmoved.

Gradually the conviction forced itself upon Mihr-un-Nisa

that, whatever his faults, the Emperor was innocent of the death of Ali Kuli, and all former resentment vanished as she came to see the fidelity which had made it impossible for him from the time of their earliest meeting ever to wrest her image from his heart.

In the month of May 1611 she yielded to his suit and the marriage was celebrated with splendour almost unparalleled even in the annals of the Moghul court. The poor of Agra, irrespective of race and creed, were feasted and all received gifts of money and of clothing out of the imperial treasury.

Nur Jehan, Empress—her great influence.

By the sovereign's decree Mihr-un-Nisa became not only Empress Consort but was created Empress Regnant, which implied that she ruled the empire jointly with the Emperor, and she received the titles of Nur Mahal (Light of the Palace) and Nur Jehan (Light of the World). It was by this latter name that she was ever afterwards known, and, as though afraid of not sufficiently emphasising her great position in the eyes of all his subjects, the Emperor commanded the issue of a new coinage, bearing her name and titles side by side with his own, with the following inscription: "Gold has a hundred splendours added to it by receiving the name of Nur Jehan the Queen". With the marriage of the Empress came the elevation of all her relatives to the highest posts in the empire.

Her father, Ghiyas Beg, already ennobled under the title of Itimad-ud Daula, was now appointed *Vakil* or Prime Minister; his elder son Abul Hasan was nominated Master of the Household with the title of Asaf Khan, and his youngest son Ibrahim became Governor of Bihar and was in future known under the title of Fath Jang. The influence of Nur Jehan practically revolutionised Jehangir's reign and also brought about an immense change for the better in the personal character of the Emperor. Gifted with rare intelligence and above all with an immense amount of human understanding, the Empress, whilst realising her husband's grave faults and being fully alive to his many vices, also divined the nobler qualities of generosity and capacity for affection underlying them. She brought all the good that was latent in him to the surface, and although she was powerless to eradicate his habits of intemperance, the happiness which had come into his life made him more tolerant towards others, and the inhuman punishments such as the impaling or flaying of unhappy prisoners, quite usual in the earlier part of his reign, were never witnessed again during his lifetime.

Jehangir, encouraged by his consort, adopted the Emperor Akbar's methods and made himself accessible to all his subjects, rich and poor alike.

Some golden bells in the Emperor's apartments at the fort palace of Agra were attached to a long chain which was brought through to one of the outer walls and, at certain hours of the day, even the most humble of his subjects were able, by pulling the chain, to gain admittance to the sovereign.

Nur Jehan unhesitatingly discarded the veil and the purdah, and constantly showed herself to the populace from the Zer Jarokha window in readiness to receive petitions which any of the people might desire to present to her. She was a friend to all who needed her protection, and, to quote the words of Abdul Hadi, historian of her time, " She never heard of oppression but exerted herself on behalf of the oppressed, and never heard of an orphan girl but contributed to her wedding portion ".

Nur Jehan never made a parade of the immense influence she exercised in all departments of state, from the appointment of a provincial viceroy, to questions of minor importance, such as the designs of the rich brocades worn by the ladies of the court ; she never consciously put Jehangir in the background, but the Emperor fully realised that she brought far greater ability to bear upon the administration of the empire than he did and, being of a naturally indolent temperament, he was content to leave it in her firm yet gentle hands.

The Empress here again showed tact and wisdom, and though she derived much support and assistance from her father and elder brother, she also, from the very commencement of her reign, sought the advice of one of the Emperor's sons.

Prince Khusru was disqualified and Prince Parviz, the second, was vain and incompetent and had, in addition, already become a victim to the family failing of intemperance. There thus remained only the third son, Prince Khurram, whose mother was one of Jehangir's Rajputni queens, Jodh Bai, daughter of Raja Udai Singh of Marwar.

Rise of Prince Khurram.

Khurram (the Joyous) had at that period just completed his twentieth year. Gentle and reserved in manner, temperate in his habits, he was possessed of remarkable gifts as a leader of men and of boundless ambition.

The Empress, quick to detect the great qualities of the

Prince, resolved to strengthen the bonds already existing between her stepsons and herself by bringing about a marriage between him and the lovely young daughter, Arjumand Banu, of her brother Asaf Khan. This union developed into one of passionate mutual affection, but Arjumand Banu, unlike her aunt, never played a prominent part in the public life of the empire. Her sole desire was to be uppermost in the heart of the man she loved, to be allowed to share his joys and sorrows, his triumphs and vicissitudes of fortune.

As the Empress had hoped, Prince Khurram now co-operated in all things with her and her father and brothers, and, although in point of fact he was only the third in the natural order of succession, Nur Jehan made no secret of her desire that the Emperor should nominate him heir to the imperial throne. The dramatic rise to power of Nur Jehan and her relatives not unnaturally aroused the jealousy of a considerable number, though not of all the older nobles of the court, who were able to recall the day when Ghiyas Beg had arrived in India a penniless refugee, and who also viewed Prince Khurram's attitude with grave discontent. The situation thus created brought about a very strong revulsion of feeling in favour of Prince Khusru, which aimed at reconciliation between him and his father and at his consequent formal adoption as heir to the throne. Prince Khusru's claims as eldest son would have been difficult to put aside had not his attitude in the past been greatly against him, but, apart from this, circumstances arose which gave his young brother unique opportunity of proving the brilliancy of his gifts, and Prince Khusru soon found himself completely overshadowed by his outstanding personality. Looking back upon the Emperor Akbar's glorious reign, with its almost unbroken roll of military and diplomatic triumphs, there is the record of one complete failure, that of his attempts to win the allegiance of the house of Bappa Rawal of Mewar to the Moghul throne.

Mewar still unconquered.

Maharana Pertab Singh, his proud spirit unbroken by the disaster of Haldighat, had, for several years, wandered about a homeless fugitive amongst the wild Bhils of the Aravallis. His queen and daughters, accustomed though they were to the luxury surrounding an Oriental court, shared his adversity, living in a disused tin mine in the remote district of Jawad, whilst some of his children still of tender age were cradled in baskets swung high up on trees to protect them from attack by savage beasts of prey.

Undismayed by all privations, Pertab commanded the peasantry of the plains of Mewar to cease from cultivating their fields and to make of them desert land and thus, if possible, starve out the imperial troops. Defeat had not lowered the Maharana in the eyes of his subjects, and this heart-breaking decree was obeyed without a murmur of dissent.

Gradually the Moghul garrisons stationed in Mewar began to feel the dearth of supplies within the country and also found that the food convoys sent from the imperial headquarters at Ajmere were intercepted and seized by bands of Bhil raiders, who were also carrying out instructions given them by Pertab. After a time the Maharana came to the conclusion that this system of wearying the enemy had broken his resistance to a certain extent, and decided to follow up his advantage by summoning every available Rajput and Bhil soldier to his banner and leading this nondescript army into the plains. The Moghuls, weakened and demoralised by the privations endured and by the suddenness of the attack, offered very feeble resistance, and the great fortress of Kumbhalmir, which had figured so prominently in the glorious and often chequered history of the line of Bappa Rawal, was retaken by storm.

When in 1597, several years before the Emperor Akbar's death, the brave Maharana breathed his last, practically the whole of his dominions with the exception of the city of Chitor had once more come under his sceptre.

He was succeeded on the throne of Mewar by his eldest son Amar Singh, who was briefly mentioned in our previous chapter as the spokesman of his father on the occasion of the fateful interview with Man Singh of Amber before the battle of Haldighat.

The new Maharana, who inherited his great father's remarkable military and administrative gifts, was able to devote the first few years of his reign to the reorganisation of his country so as to meet the inevitable renewal of the Moghul attempts to destroy its independence.

The accession of Jehangir to the imperial throne, followed so closely by the revolt of Khusru and the consequent disorder in the empire, greatly favoured Amar Singh's efforts and gave him time to inaugurate a new assessment of arable land throughout his kingdom and completely to remodel the feudal system, establishing the gradation of ranks amongst the vassal chieftains which is still in force in Mewar at the present day.

Between the years 1608 and 1613 the Emperor Jehangir despatched several military expeditions against the Sesodias, all commanded by the ablest generals in the empire, but in spite of the excellent leadership and the bravery of the troops, they were unable to gain any advantage over the heroic defenders.

The situation remained unchanged until 1613, when the Empress Nur Jehan turned her astute and ambitious mind towards solving the problem which had proved too intricate even for the Emperor Akbar. He had realised that the permanent security of the Moghul hold on Rajputana and the permanent allegiance of the Rajput states depended upon the incorporation of the premier Rajput kingdom into the imperial system and upon the Sun of the Hindus becoming one of the feudatory princes of the empire.

Campaign in Mewar.

Nur Jehan shared this view entirely and, in addition, she felt that to Jehangir, in whose character there was a marked element of vanity, the possibility of succeeding where his father had failed would make a great appeal. Her brilliant mind conceived the idea of using all her influence to secure the appointment of commander-in-chief in Mewar for Prince Khurram, knowing that, should he achieve victory against the Sesodias, he would so ingratiate himself with the Emperor as to make his nomination as heir to the throne almost a certainty.

The Empress's plan received unexpected support from the Khan-i-Azam Aziz Koka, who, although of great age at the time, still held the actual command of the Moghul troops in Mewar.

It was a strange thing that the father-in-law of Prince Khusru should advocate the appointment of his rival to so important a post, and his reasons for doing so have always remained obscure, but certain it is that Aziz wrote to the Emperor, suggesting that the army operating in Mewar should be strongly reinforced, and that Prince Khurram should be associated with himself in the command. At the same time he urged the removal of the entire imperial court from Agra to Ajmere, which, he suggested, should for the time being become the seat of government. Jehangir unquestioningly accepted the Khan-i-Azam's advice, and, in the autumn of the year 1613, he and the Empress and the whole court proceeded to Ajmere. Early in the following year Prince Khurram set out for Mewar at the head of 12,000 cavalry, but soon found that Aziz Koka, in spite of having himself suggested his appointment to the joint command,

had no intention of allowing him to interfere in the actual leadership.

Jehangir, with customary indolence, had omitted, when sending his son to Mewar, to define the exact position he wished the Prince to hold; and Khurram, immediately on arrival at headquarters, discovered that Aziz intended to keep the direction of the campaign in his own hands and to use him merely as an inspiring figurehead, with which to arouse the enthusiasm and loyalty of the troops.

This state of affairs, however, was completely contrary to the intention of Nur Jehan and also left Khurram's ambitions entirely unsatisfied. At first the Prince took no decisive step to mark his ever-increasing resentment of the Khan-i-Azam's attitude, but when, mistaking Khurram's forbearance for weakness, Aziz began to treat him with undisguised insolence, the Prince's patience gave way. In obedience to his orders the Khan-i-Azam was arrested in his own headquarters by Fidai Khan, the paymaster-general of the forces, and a close friend of Khurram, and the prince sent a letter to the Emperor with a full report of the occurrences which had led up to this crisis. In reply, Jehangir issued a decree which transferred the sole command of the forces in Mewar to his son and, at the same time, ordered the Khan-i-Azam's removal to the fortress of Gwalior as a state prisoner.

Khurram had now a free hand, and he lost no time in putting into execution the intricate plans which had, for some time, been maturing in his mind. Amongst his officers there was a renegade brother of the Maharana Pertab Singh, named Sagra, who had thrown his lot in with the Moghuls before the Emperor Akbar's death and had gradually risen to the rank of a commander of 2000.

Khurram installed this man in the ancient fortress of Chitor as Maharana of Mewar under the suzerainty of the Emperor Jehangir, and hoped thereby to establish rival camps amongst the Rajput nobility.

In this he was entirely mistaken, for not a single Rajput, Thakur, or clansman, not even the poorest of the wild Bhils of the forest, would take cognisance of the traitor, who was to rule, a phantom king himself, over a realm of shadows.

Gradually the surroundings in which he had been placed, the echoes of a tragic and heroic past with which the halls of the old fortress seemed to resound, commenced to work upon the mind of Sagra and brought him to the realisation of the despicable part he was playing.

All the innate Rajput spirit, that strange mingling of patriotism to the cause and of loyalty to the head of the clan irrespective of his personal methods, which had moved his brother Sakta to help Pertab Singh to escape from his pursuers, rose to the surface in the heart of Sagra. Without further hesitation and attended only by a few followers he rode from Chitor to the camp of his nephew, Pertab's son, the real Maharana, and offered him his unconditional allegiance. Amar Singh received him most kindly and immediately enrolled him amongst the feudatories of Mewar with the customary gift of landed property.

The Maharana was fully alive to the fact that the appointment of Prince Khurram to the supreme command of the imperial forces meant a renewed attack by the Moghuls, and he sought to render it fruitless by emulating his father's strategy and retiring into the Aravallis.

Prince Khurram, however, had conceived a plan with which to forestall any attempt by the Rajputs and their faithful though untrained Bhil followers to ambush the imperial troops in the mountains, or to starve them in the plains as had previously happened. He established twelve fortified camps at all the most important openings from the Aravallis to the plains and instituted a complete blockade. In addition, bodies of Moghul cavalry swept the plains of Mewar, laying them waste, and though, as a result, the imperial troops also suffered considerable privation, the effect upon their opponents was so drastic as to reduce them to utter starvation.

From time to time bands of Rajputs succeeded in breaking through the blockade, and on one such occasion the Moghuls only narrowly escaped defeat at the hands of a force led by Prince Bhim Singh, a younger son of the Maharana and a man of reckless daring, but the immediate result was a still further tightening of the remorseless chain of military posts.

Prince Khurram was sufficient of a Rajput himself to know that, to them, a hard combat in the field would have been infinitely preferable to this exhausting method of warfare and also that the proud spirit of their race lived as strongly then as in the days of Ala-ud-Din, and that they would have unhesitatingly accepted death in preference to Islam for themselves and dishonour for their wives.

But the sweeping changes that the great Emperor Akbar had so wisely inaugurated were perpetuated in the mind of his grandson, and the humane decree which had, for all time, forbidden the barbarous custom of carrying the wives and

daughters of the defeated enemy into slavery, was rendered doubly safe in the hands of the man whose maternal grandfather was Mal Deo of Marwar.

Many of the greatest of the Rajput princes were proud to serve under his banner, and gradually a feeling of something akin to understanding and confidence came to the recalcitrant feudatory chieftains of Mewar, and brought the conviction to their minds that peace with honour might be made and eventually restore to their poor stricken land her ancient glory.

Peace proposals by the Maharana.

Prince Karan Singh, eldest son and heir apparent of the Maharana, upheld the feudatory chieftains of Mewar in their desire to bring about a peaceful settlement, and finally Amar Singh agreed to sending two of his officers to Prince Khurram's headquarters under a flag of truce.

The proposals which they were empowered to make in the name of their sovereign were that Mewar should henceforth become a feudatory state of the empire, the Maharana promising unswerving loyalty to the Emperor both in word and in deed and undertaking to place the entire resources of his kingdom at the disposal of his suzerain in time of war.

In return he demanded that, as supreme head of the Solar race, he should never be expected to attend the imperial court in person, but should be represented by the heir apparent, and that simultaneously with the acceptance of these proposals every Moghul soldier should be withdrawn from Mewar. A separate verbal agreement stipulated that the hand of a Sesodia princess should never be demanded in marriage for any member of the imperial house.

In the consideration which he gave to the Maharana's proposals, Prince Khurram was much influenced by a man of great ability, his confidential major-domo, a Brahmin named Sundar Das, who was deeply attached to him. He strongly urged the Prince to accept them, and pointed out to him that not only was the allegiance of the ruler of Mewar of vital importance to the empire, but that to win his personal friendship must of necessity be an immense advantage to the Prince himself.

As a result of this advice, Khurram informed the Rajput envoys that the final decision must rest with the Emperor, and that he would send them to Ajmere under a safe-conduct to lay their peace proposals before Jehangir in person. Sundar Das and the Prince's private secretary, Mullah Shukrullah Shirazi, a learned Moslem divine, accompanied the envoys and Sundar Das was the bearer of a letter

from Khurram to his father in which he urged him most strongly to accept the Rajput offer.

Jehangir's reception of the Maharana's ambassadors was most courteous and left little doubt in their minds as to the attitude he intended to assume in regard to the proposals of peace. After suitably entertaining them he bade them return to his son's headquarters, and sent by Sundar Das, who again attended them, a letter to Prince Khurram warmly praising and congratulating him on his success, and with it a firman or decree granting him the right to conclude a treaty of peace on the lines proposed by the Maharana. The Emperor undertook to restore the ancient capital of Chitor to the Sesodias, stipulating only that the fortifications destroyed by Akbar should not be rebuilt.

The firman was, immediately it reached the Prince's hands, given to Sundar Das to take to the Maharana, jointly with a cordial invitation to the Rajput sovereign to visit him in his camp.

Peace concluded with Mewar.

At length, on July 26, 1614, Amar Singh, attended by all the great vassals of his kingdom, arrived at the Moghul headquarters, and, as the ruler of Mewar approached the dais on which Khurram was seated, the Moghul Prince rose to meet him and, taking him by the hand, led him to the seat of honour on his right.

With simple dignity the Maharana removed a priceless ruby from his turban and offered it to the Prince, and simultaneously his servants led forward as a further tribute seven elephants and nine horses, all that was left of his former vast stud. In response Prince Khurram, with graceful gesture, raised his hand and a long line of Moghul attendants appeared, some leading magnificently caparisoned elephants and horses, others bearing splendid robes of honour and jewelled swords, and, in the shortest possible time, Amar Singh and all his nobles were the recipients of gifts far exceeding in value the tribute which they had brought.

No effort was spared on the part of the Moghul Prince to omit from these ceremonies anything that could possibly bring a sense of humiliation to the Maharana. He was treated as an honoured guest in the truest sense of the word, and, as a crowning act of courtesy, in the very moment when the two men parted amidst mutual expressions of sympathy and esteem, Amar Singh received information that the orders for the evacuation of the Moghul garrison of Chitor had been received and with them the command to hand over the government to the Sesodia officials.

Almost immediately after his father's departure, the heir apparent of Mewar, Prince Karan Singh, arrived at Khurram's headquarters to tender his allegiance and was received with every mark of respect and presented with a valuable dress of honour, a jewelled sword and dagger, a horse wearing a golden saddle and an elephant. That same evening the tents occupied by Prince Khurram and his staff were, by his orders, taken down and, accompanied by Prince Karan Singh, who was attended by Ram Chandra Chauhan,[1] Rao of Bedla, he led his troops back to Ajmere. A large body of Rajput clansmen who, in accordance with the terms agreed upon, were to form the Maharana's feudal quota towards the defence of the empire, completed the Prince's escort.

On arrival in the city, Prince Khurram was accorded an enthusiastic welcome, and as he, with the heir of Mewar at his side, entered the Shamiana or Audience Tent, they found the Emperor surrounded by all the great nobles of the realm, assembled in solemn durbar to greet them. Advancing to the foot of the throne, Khurram prostrated himself before his father, but Jehangir immediately made him rise and warmly embraced him.

Then followed words of cordial welcome from the Emperor to Prince Karan Singh, who was given the place of honour on the right hand of the sovereign. A few days later the young Rajput was received by the Empress Nur Jehan and honours continued to be mutually conferred by the Emperor on his son and upon his new vassal.

The Moghul Prince's *mansab* was raised from one of 12,000 to one of 15,000 men, and Karan Singh was created a commander of 5000 in his own right. As a crowning action with which to emphasise that the long and bitter feud between the houses of Timur and Bappa Rawal had come to a close, and which reflected honour on both sides equally, Jehangir gave orders to his sculptors to carve life-size equestrian statues of Maharana Amar Singh and his heir, which, when completed, were placed in a prominent position below the Zer Jarokha window of the palace at Agra.

Shortly afterwards the presence of the heir apparent of Mewar in his own country became necessary and the Emperor gave him permission to leave, his place at the imperial court being taken by his younger brother, Bhim Singh, previously mentioned as being one of the principal bulwarks of the Rajput defence against the Moghuls.

[1] One of the foremost nobles of Mewar and a descendant of Prithvi Raj of Delhi.

Strangely enough, a strong friendship soon grew up between Prince Khurram and Bhim Singh, recently such bitter enemies, and, in accordance with Rajput custom, the two young men promptly exchanged turbans, which was synonymous with adopting one another as brothers.

At his son's request, the Emperor conferred on Bhim Singh the title of Raja and a *jagir* at Raj Mahal on the banks of the Bunas river; and from that time onwards the two princes became inseparable companions, Khurram asking the young Rajput's advice on every matter, even the most confidential.

First British Embassy to the Moghul court. East India Company.

January 10, 1616, saw the arrival at Ajmere, where the court was still in residence, of Sir Thomas Roe, special ambassador of King James I. to the court of the Great Moghul.

The relations between India and England, which had originated in Akbar's reign and had led to the formation of the Levant Company, briefly mentioned in the previous chapter, had been followed in 1600 by the grant of a charter by Queen Elizabeth establishing the Company of Merchants trading with the East Indies, better known under the name of the East India Company.

King James's object in despatching Sir Thomas Roe to the Moghul court was to try and obtain the Emperor's consent to a commercial treaty being concluded, which would allow the newly established corporation to erect further factories on Indian soil in addition to those existing since the year 1612.[1]

The ambassador brought with him the draft of the treaty, but Jehangir would not agree to any of the suggestions it put forward, and, although Sir Thomas remained at the Moghul court for three years as the Emperor's honoured guest and enjoyed his personal friendship as also that of many of the leading nobles, the mission on which he was sent was never achieved. The sole permanent result remaining is the ambassador's extraordinarily interesting diary of his sojourn in Moghul India, the pages of which abound with vivid pictures of its splendour, comedy, and also of its sadness.

Events in the Deccan.

The unbounded confidence Prince Khurram had inspired in the Emperor by the great gifts, both military and diplomatic, which he had given proof of in the conquest and pacification of Mewar, was now shown in his appointment as Commander-in-Chief of the Moghul troops in the Deccan, where the position had been growing steadily less favourable.

[1] These were at Surat, Ahmedabad, Cambay and Gogo.

After the brutal putting to death of the heroic Queen Regent, Chand Bibi, in 1600, only one amongst the Ahmednagar nobles strove to perpetuate the principles for which she stood. This man was Malik Ambar, Governor of Daulatabad, who, like so many prominent figures in the history of the Musulman states of the Deccan, was an Abyssinian by birth and had commenced life as a slave. By virtue of his unusual talents, he had, within a few years, risen from obscurity to the governorship of Daulatabad, the strongest fortress in the kingdom. When, after the Queen's death and the capture of Ahmednagar, the child King, Bahadur, was sent into exile, Malik Ambar proved equal to the occasion by instantly proclaiming as king another child of the royal line, under the title of Murtaza Nizam Shah II., with himself as Regent and with the capital at Daulatabad. Malik Ambar had the power to inspire devotion to his person and enthusiasm for the cause he had at heart, and he succeeded in a very short time in rallying round him practically all the leading nobles, both foreign and Deccani, and, with their assistance, reorganised the Ahmednagar forces for a renewed struggle with the Moghuls.

Malik Ambar's inborn qualities as a soldier brought him to the conviction that guerilla warfare carried out by large bodies of light cavalry would be the most effective against an enemy operating, like the Moghuls, far from the centre whence they drew reinforcements. He enrolled in the Ahmednagar army large numbers of Mahrattas, the leading Hindu race of the kingdom, who were descended from the early Aryan invaders of India and from the women of the aboriginal tribes, and who had in the pre-Mohammedan period been the founders of the Yadava kingdom of Devagiri, which had figured so prominently later in the reign of Ala-ud-Din Khilji.

The Nizam Shahi kings of Ahmednagar were, though Moslems by religion, to a certain extent of Hindu extraction,[1] and had always treated their Mahratta subjects with kindness and tolerance; their nobles and leading men were welcome figures at their court and a fair contingent of Mahratta soldiers had always served in the armies of the state.

The Mahratta Mavalis, or mountaineers of the Sahyadri range, were particularly suited to the task before them, as they had extraordinary powers of endurance and were, in addition, very fine horsemen.

[1] See Part II. Chap. VI. p. 214.

Enlistment by Malik Ambar of Mahratta soldiers. The Bhonsle family.

Malik Ambar very wisely gave the command of the Mahratta levies he had raised to their own chiefs, prominent amongst whom were Lakhoji Jadhavrao, a scion of the Yadava house of Devagiri, and Maloji Bhonsle, a descendant of the royal house of Mewar, whose ancestor, having been exiled from his native land many centuries before, had settled in the Deccan.

Maloji's son, Shahaji by name, was married to Jijabhai, daughter of Lakhoji, and this marriage was in due course fraught with great consequences for the future of India.

Malik Ambar's plan of campaign proved eminently successful. The Moghul troops detailed for garrison duty in the fortress of Ahmednagar were never safe from attack by mounted raiders ; the imperial caravans were ambushed and plundered, and any attempt at reprisals was frustrated by the extraordinary rapidity and cunning with which the raiders dispersed to their respective homes and became merged in the peaceful agricultural population of the country.

Jehangir proceeds to Mandu. Prince Khurram's march to the Deccan.

The Nizam Shahi troops repeatedly defeated Moghul reinforcements sent from the North, and finally succeeded in regaining possession of the city of Ahmednagar. It was at this moment that Jehangir decided to entrust Prince Khurram with the supreme command in the Deccan and to move with the entire court to Mandu, the ancient capital of the Malwa kings, so as to be himself within easy reach of the scene of operations.

It was not till early in November 1616 that Khurram, at the head of a large and magnificently equipped army, composed chiefly of men who had served under him in Mewar, set off to Burhanpur, the Moghul headquarters in the Deccan.

Some of the most distinguished soldiers and nobles of the empire held appointments on the Prince's staff, amongst these the Brahmin Sundar Das, who had received the title of Rai Rayan Raja Bikramajit in recognition of his services in Mewar.

Hitherto the title of Sultan was the highest prefixed to the names of the princes of the house of Timur. Jehangir marked the occasion of his son's departure for the Deccan by conferring upon him that of Shah, otherwise King.

The Prince was joined on the frontier of Mewar by Prince Karan Singh, at the head of a strong contingent of Sesodia clansmen, and, on March 6, 1617, he entered Burhanpur. No sooner had he arrived there than Khurram sent Raja Bikramajit and another of his principal officers named Afzul Khan as ambassadors to Malik Ambar and Ibrahim Adil Shah II. of Bijapur with an offer of peace, on condition that

they agreed to restore all territory conquered by Malik Ambar and henceforth paid tribute to the empire. Khurram's fame as a commander had penetrated far into Western India, as had also the knowledge of the great superiority both in numbers and in equipment of his army, and, realising the hopelessness of further resistance, the Deccan Sultans decided to accept his offer.

Settlement with Bijapur and Ahmednagar.

In the hope of creating a favourable impression, Ibrahim Adil Shah proceeded to Burhanpur in person as representative and spokesman of the other sovereigns of the Deccan, and, in his own name and on their behalf, announced their acceptance of the Moghul demands, at the same time presenting gifts of great value to Prince Khurram.

By the terms of the treaty all the Deccan kingdoms entered the imperial system as feudatory states, and Malik Ambar surrendered the fortress and city of Ahmednagar as well as the district of Balaghat, which he had recently conquered.

The new town of Khadki, built by the Regent almost at the foot of the great rock of Daulatabad, now became the seat of government of the Nizam Shahi kings.

Khurram continued to pursue his policy of conciliation which had proved so successful in Mewar in his treatment also of the Deccan kings, and, at the conclusion of a full report of all that had taken place, which he sent to the Emperor, he begged his father to confer upon Ibrahim Adil Shah of Bijapur one of the greatest distinctions it was in his power to bestow, the title of *Farzand* or Son.

In reply Jehangir immediately sent a firman to the monarch of Bijapur, inscribed with the words : " Thou hast become, at Shah Khurram's request, renowned in the world as my son ".[1]

Following up his written report, Prince Khurram now proceeded to Mandu to describe every incident in detail to the Emperor and also to introduce the ambassadors of the Deccan kings so that they might present Jehangir with the gifts which he had accepted only until they could be conveyed to the sovereign in person.

The reception accorded to his son by the Emperor in the splendid Halls of Audience, where the Malwa kings had once held court, was one of unprecedented magnificence.

Prince Khurram receives the title of Shah Jehan.

As he approached the throne upon which Jehangir was seated, attendants clothed him in a golden robe of honour, especially made for the occasion, the collar and sleeves of

[1] Beni Prasad, *History of Jehangir*, chap. xi. p. 283.

which were embroidered with pearls ; and heralds, in loud tones, proclaimed his elevation to the unique rank of commander of 30,000 with the title of Shah Jehan or " King of the World ". This name is the one by which Prince Khurram is best known to history and by which we shall henceforth call him.

The viceroyalty of Gujarat, one of the most fertile and in consequence one of the richest provinces of the empire, was conferred by Jehangir upon his son, and Shah Jehan was, by reason of all the honours showered upon him, now looked upon by the entire court as the future heir to the throne.

Curiously enough, the one person to raise obstacles in his path was the Empress Nur Jehan, who, at an earlier period, had used all her influence with her consort to raise her stepson to the dazzling heights to which he had now attained.

Quarrel between Nur Jehan and Shah Jehan.

The Empress's love for Jehangir was deep and sincere, and she had always sought to promote his interests, but at this time she saw clearly that his incurable habits of intemperance were slowly undermining his health and were almost certain to shorten his span of life considerably. When envisaging a future from which death would have removed the Emperor, her ambitious and able mind had dreamt of assuming the reins of government herself with Shah Jehan as a willing assistant ; and she had not then realised that the young Prince, far from being inclined to play this part, possessed personal ambition and daring equal to her own, and that he in no way intended to be a willing tool in her hands. As soon as the conviction of his independent spirit forced itself upon her mind, the Empress resolved to put down his growing influence by every means in her power, and to attempt to supplant him by his younger brother, Prince Shahriyar, who had just reached the age of manhood. This youth was incompetent and weak, almost to the point of imbecility, and Nur Jehan, feeling that he would never interfere in her policy, strove further to strengthen her position by uniting him to Ladili, her daughter by her first marriage. The wedding was celebrated in April 1621, with great magnificence in the mansion of Itimad-ud-Daula at Agra, and was attended by the Emperor and Empress and their entire court.

Jehangir, in offering his congratulations to the bridal pair, expressed the fervent wish that " their union would be propitious to this ever-increasing state ".[1]

As the future will show, the Empress had made a grave

[1] Beni Prasad, *History of Jehangir*, chap. xiv. p. 325.

mistake in bringing about this marriage and had thereby destroyed one of the chief pillars of her strength, the unity of her own family in support of her aims ; in plain language she had divided the house of Itimad-ud-Daula against itself. Asaf Khan, Shah Jehan's father-in-law, naturally stood by him, and Itimad-ud-Daula, the Empress's father, was much too clear-sighted a man to believe for one moment that Shahriyar, already irreverently styled by the populace " Nashudani " or " the good-for-nothing ", could ever be a serious rival to the strong and able Shah Jehan.

It is possible that, had her father been spared for some time longer, his wiser counsels might have prevailed and have again improved the relations between the Empress and Shah Jehan, but, shortly after the wedding of Ladili and Shahriyar, Azizan Bibi, Nur Jehan's mother, died and, inconsolable at her loss, Itimad-ud-Daula within a few months followed her to the grave.

From the moment of their parents' death, the Empress and her brother Asaf Khan drifted hopelessly apart and, though for a short time they made no actual attempt at opposing one another, it was an open secret that each supported a rival candidate for the imperial succession.

Shah Jehan still remained supreme in his father's favour, and this all the more as he needed his services almost immediately to deal with a fresh outbreak of hostilities in the Deccan.

Malik Ambar was the greatest and most dominant figure in Deccani politics, and though it is possible that Ibrahim Adil Shah of Bijapur and Mohammed Kutub Shah of Golconda, if left to themselves, might have kept faith with the house of Timur, the Regent of Ahmednagar looked upon the recently concluded peace merely as a truce, during which all his energies were turned towards strengthening his resources for a renewed struggle to regain, and permanently hold, the independence of the Deccan.

Renewed hostilities in the Deccan.

No sooner had the imperial court left Western India to return to the North than, by Malik Ambar's instructions, his Mahratta levies resumed their raids, and, within a very short time, he prevailed also upon the Kings of Bijapur and Golconda to join forces with him in a league against the Moghul empire.

Within three months their allied armies had succeeded not only in regaining practically the entire territory which, by the terms of the treaty, had been incorporated in the empire, but also they had invaded Khandesh, had laid siege to Burhanpur, and in addition Malik Ambar's Mahratta

horsemen had crossed the river Narbada, entered Malwa and plundered that rich province to within a few miles of Mandu.

The aged Khan Khanan Mirza Abdurrahim, who still commanded the Moghul forces in the Deccan, and all the officers and soldiers alike, now called aloud for the return of Shah Jehan, who, they felt, was the only man to restore peace and order, and in response to the universal demand the Emperor in 1620 gave his son orders to lead his army back to the scene of the trouble.

Shah Jehan accepted the Deccan command, but made it conditional upon his brother Khusru being given into his charge and allowed to accompany him on his campaign.

Shah Jehan was fully alive to his stepmother's hostility, and did not under-estimate the serious danger it constituted in regard to his succession to the throne; at the same time his contempt for the personality of Shahriyar hardly allowed the latter, even in spite of the Empress's patronage, to appear in the light of a rival.

Surrender of Khusru to Shah Jehan. Moghul victory in the Deccan.

Khusru, the eldest of his brothers, and the rightful heir to the throne, was the only one he feared, knowing that, however secure he himself might feel in the support of the great nobles and the devotion of his soldiers, the helpless unhappy captive still retained his hold upon the populace and commanded their unalterable affection.

With the passing years Jehangir's heart had, to a great extent, softened towards Khusru, and, but for the fact that he knew Shah Jehan was the only person able to cope with the situation in the Deccan, he would probably have refused his demand, feeling that it portended no good for the hapless prisoner.

As matters stood the Emperor had no choice but to yield to this request, and towards the end of that same year Shah Jehan took leave of his father, who with his court was in residence in Lahore at the moment, and, leading an army overwhelming both in numbers and in perfection of equipment, marched towards the Deccan.

Six hundred and fifty of the leading *Mansabdars* of the empire with their retainers served under his banner, and, in addition, he was provided with a complete train of artillery perfect in every detail.

Having advanced into Malwa, the Prince made a brief halt with the main body of the army at Ujjain, and a force was detached with orders to proceed to Mandu to relieve the garrison of that city, which was sorely beset by the Mahratta bands of Malik Ambar; these were under the command of

Shahaji Bhonsle, son of Maloji, who, on the death of his father in 1619, had succeeded to the family *jagir* of Poona.

The Mandu troops, reinforced by the detachments from Shah Jehan's army, succeeded in driving the Mahrattas back across the Narbada and shortly afterwards, being joined by Shah Jehan's army, they marched to Burhanpur.

After allowing his weary troops a much needed rest of nine days the prince resumed his advance in the direction of Khadki, the capital of the Nizam Shahi kingdom.

The city offered no resistance and was immediately occupied, and Shah Jehan was thus able to continue his march to Ahmednagar to the relief of the Moghul garrison there, which, commanded by a very gallant officer named Khanjar Khan, had resisted the hardships of a siege for several months.

From Daulatabad, where he had accompanied King Murtaza Nizam Shah, Malik Ambar once more sent envoys to Shah Jehan, offering a renewal of allegiance to the empire as regards himself and his allies.

Peace again concluded with the Deccan states.

Shah Jehan agreed to the conclusion of peace with the Deccan states on condition that they abandoned all their recent conquests and ceded a large additional tract of territory to the Emperor. Finally, he imposed on Ahmednagar, Bijapur and Golconda an indemnity of fifty lakhs of rupees, to be paid jointly to the imperial treasury.

All conditions were accepted, and Shah Jehan, returning to Burhanpur, sent by his Diwan, Afzul Khan, a detailed account to his father of the renewed success he had achieved.

The Emperor again showed his appreciation of the great services rendered in the most generous manner. Shah Jehan received a ruby plume and a valuable horse recently presented to the Emperor by Shah Abbas the Great of Persia. Khanjar Khan, the intrepid defender of Ahmednagar, was created a commander of 4000, and every officer of Shah Jehan's army was given advancement in just proportion to the part he had played in bringing the campaign to a successful issue.

Court intrigues. Murder of Khusru.

Nur Jehan, though she loyally rejoiced in a victory which so greatly enhanced the prestige of the empire, deplored the fact that it had been brought about by Shah Jehan, the one man whom she most desired to humble, and who, she realised, would now be given a higher place even than previously in his father's estimation. As a last resource, she determined to make use of the period intervening before the Prince's return to Jehangir's court, to undermine his influence with the Emperor; and Shah Jehan's besetting sin,

his relentless ambition, which shunned no means to attain its goal, on this occasion facilitated her task.

In August 1621, Shah Jehan received news at Burhanpur that his father had fallen seriously ill with asthma, and the one thought which took possession of his mind on hearing this was that, in the event of his father's death, a fresh movement in favour of Khusru might take place and jeopardise his own claim to the imperial throne.

So as to appear completely ignorant of the event he was planning, Shah Jehan, attended by a few personal friends, left Burhanpur on a hunting expedition some miles distant, and that same night, acting under his instructions, his confidential servant, Raza Bahadur, and several others, forced their way into the apartment of the unhappy Khusru and strangled him as he slept.

Thus there came to its close one of the most tragic careers in the history of India. Richly endowed with personal gifts, above all others that of inspiring affection, Khusru, though appearing marked out to play a brilliant part, suffered, from his early manhood to the hour of his death, largely through the faults of others. The only real happiness vouchsafed to him had been the passionate and unalterable devotion which existed between him and his wife, daughter of the Khan-i-Azam. She had stood by him in all the worst hours of his life ; she had soothed him in those desperate moments of his temporary blindness and had accompanied him also on his fatal journey to the Deccan.

Prince Khusru's earthly remains were hurriedly, in fact almost secretly, buried at Burhanpur, and Shah Jehan, on returning to the city from his hunting expedition, wrote to the Emperor informing him that his son had fallen a victim to a sudden attack of colic. Judging from his own memoirs, Jehangir professed to believe this version of Prince Khusru's death, but independent sources affirm that, in truth, he held a very different opinion.

To Shah Jehan throughout his life the crime which he had instigated brought shame only, and though in the days of his greatness he was able to silence his guilty conscience he was to live to realise in all its bitterness the cruel treatment he had meted out to his brother.

The immediate result of the deed was to strengthen the Empress in her efforts to oust Shah Jehan from the succession and to advance the claims of Shahriyar.

Clear-sighted in all things, Nur Jehan had looked upon Shah Jehan's request that his brother should accompany

him to the Deccan with suspicion, and now she unceasingly impressed upon the Emperor her belief in the Prince's responsibility for his death.

Estrangement of Jehangir and Shah Jehan.

It is unquestionably true that, from that moment, Jehangir and Shah Jehan became almost completely estranged, and but for the risk resulting from Shah Jehan's power in the Deccan being practically that of an independent monarch, the Emperor would in all probability have broken with him entirely.

Within a very short time events made it expedient for the Emperor to call upon Shah Jehan's services, and simultaneously provided the Empress with the means to strike another blow at her enemy. The danger threatened from the Persians, who, according to a message received from Khan Jehan, Governor of Multan, were laying siege to Kandahar. This message reached the Emperor and Empress in the month of March 1622, when they were in residence in the famous Shalimar Garden, laid out by them near Srinagar in the beautiful valley of Kashmir. The fortress and city of Kandahar, which Akbar had so eagerly coveted, were peacefully surrendered to him in the year 1594 by the Persian governor there installed, but the ruling monarch of Persia, Shah Abbas the Great (1587–1629), was not the man to permit the treachery and unwarranted act of a servant permanently to deprive him of one of the most important strategic points and commercial centres in his vast dominions.

A year after the accession of Jehangir, the Persians had made an attempt to regain possession of the fortress, but had failed, owing principally to the fact that, being at war with Turkey, Shah Abbas was unable to put a sufficiently large army into the field.

Between the years 1611 and 1620, the Shah disguised his intentions by sending at intervals four embassies to the Moghul court, laden with precious gifts and professing sentiments of warmest friendship towards Jehangir, but in March 1622 he threw off the mask and personally led his troops against the Afghan fortress.

The Empress immediately submitted to the Emperor that Shah Jehan's military genius was the only one fitted to cope with so grave a situation, and prevailed upon Jehangir to issue a firman recalling his son from the Deccan and appointing him to the command of the expedition to be sent to relieve Kandahar.

The Emperor's decree brought Shah Jehan face to face

with a serious crisis. The Prince was under no delusion with regard to his stepmother's intention in advising Jehangir to transfer him to this fresh command, and he also realised to the full that his own personal power was concentrated in Western India, where he could place absolute reliance upon the loyalty of the officers and men of the provincial garrisons of the Deccan and of Gujarat.

He felt that in the North, separated from his devoted followers, his position in regard to the succession would be anything but secure ; on the other hand, a refusal on his part to obey the Emperor's command would furnish the Empress with the means of branding him a rebel and advancing the claim of his rival Shahriyar. At length he decided to temporise ; he evacuated Burhanpur, crossed the Narbada, and marched to Mandu, whence he wrote to his father asking to be allowed to remain there during the rainy season, and making his acceptance of the Kandahar command conditional on his appointment as Viceroy of the Punjab, with the powers of a military dictator. His final stipulation was that the fortress of Rinthambur in Rajputana should be placed under his authority and that his family should take up their residence there during his absence in Afghanistan.

The Emperor's reply was couched in terms which left no doubt in Shah Jehan's mind as to the attitude he intended to adopt towards these overbearing terms. He gave his son permission to remain at Mandu until the rains had ceased, but ordered him instantly to despatch to Multan the famous contingent of the Barha Syeds, the feudal levies of the Rajput states and the Afghan troops, in short, the flower of his army ; and, knowing that this measure spelt the death of his power, Shah Jehan not unnaturally showed some hesitation in carrying it out.

During this delay an incident occurred which, though of no great importance in itself, brought the relations between the Prince and the imperial court to a critical stage.

Some time previously Shah Jehan had petitioned the Emperor to grant him the *pargana* or district of Dholpur in Malwa in addition to the *jagirs* he already held, but Nur Jehan, who knew of his desire, forestalled him and obtained the coveted territory for Shahriyar.

Shah Jehan, believing his request to have been granted, did not wait for an official confirmation, and sent a small body of his troops to take possession of the district.

On arrival at Dholpur, the officer in command of Shah Jehan's troops found the town garrisoned by Shahriyar's

retainers. High words between the soldiers of the rival princes soon developed into a fight in which many of the combatants on both sides were killed and Sharif-ul-Mulk, Shahriyar's commander, was severely wounded. As soon as the news of the conflict reached the court, the Empress exploited it for her own purposes, and convinced Jehangir that Shah Jehan was solely to blame for what had occurred.

The die was cast ; the Emperor in his memoirs describes his son's behaviour in the following words : " Unworthy of all the favours and cherishing I bestowed on him ", and, by imperial firman, decreed that all Shah Jehan's *jagirs* in the North, including that of Hissar in the Punjab, the traditional fief of the heirs apparent, should be taken from him and transferred to his brother ; and that, in addition, Shahriyar should be appointed to the command of the army sent to the assistance of Kandahar.

Fall of Kandahar.

This appointment coincided, however, with the news of the fall of Kandahar after a siege lasting forty-five days, and Shah Abbas, having achieved his desire, sent an ambassador to the Emperor carrying an autograph letter, in which he expressed the hope " that the ever-vernal flower of union and cordiality might remain in bloom ".[1]

This was intended to present to Jehangir an accomplished fact in the hope that he would accept it, but the Emperor, intensely angered by what he looked upon as treachery on the part of the Persian monarch, continued to mass troops at Multan with the intention of retaking Kandahar.

Revolt of Shah Jehan.

He sent instructions to Prince Parviz, Governor of Bihar, to collect every soldier who could be spared from that province and to proceed to the North ; but, just at the moment when all preparations regarding Kandahar had been made, they had to be abandoned owing to a revolt by Shah Jehan at Mandu.

Maddened by the confiscation of his *jagirs* and the Emperor's treatment of him generally, he had placed himself at the head of the greater part of the large Deccan army and was advancing upon Agra.

Shah Jehan's position was a strong one, for the Moslem *Mansabdars* in the Deccan, Gujarat and Malwa, headed by the Khan Khanan, supported him whole-heartedly ; and the great prestige enjoyed by the Khan Khanan, due to his past achievements and to the fact that he was one of the very

[1] *Jehangir*, Rogers and Beveridge, vol. ii. pp. 240-45.

few remaining notable figures of Akbar's reign, made him a host in himself.

The Prince could rely absolutely upon the loyalty of his devoted Brahmin adherent Raja Bikramajit, who stood for the Hindus, and the allegiance of the Mewar contingent was assured to him by the fact that it was commanded by his adopted brother, Raja Bhim Singh.

He was not so fortunate in his relations with the other leading Rajput *Mansabdars* in his army, among them being his cousin, Maharaja Gaj Singh of Marwar, and Raja Sur Singh, head of the kindred Rathor house of Bikanir. Family ties drew them both towards Shah Jehan, but, as against these, they had been the recipients of the highest honours at the hands of the Emperor ; and, in addition, the Rajput's innate contempt for any one breaking the oath of allegiance made it inconceivable to them to repay their sovereign's trust by rising against him. Thus all attempts by Shah Jehan to win them over to his cause failed, and, favoured by the darkness of the night, both the Rajput princes assembled their clansmen and, evacuating Shah Jehan's camp, set forth to join the Emperor.

Maharana Karan Singh, the Sun of the Hindus, who had succeeded his father Amar Singh in 1620, considered himself under an equal obligation to both the contending parties and resolved upon an attitude of honourable neutrality which neither Jehangir nor his son ever attempted to encroach upon.

Of the three remaining great Rajput houses, the Kachwahas of Amber and the Haras of Bundi and Kotah were whole-heartedly loyal to the Emperor, and Bir Singh Deo of Orchha, the man who had murdered Abul Fazl, naturally kept faith with the sovereign who had not only protected him from the consequences of his crime, but had raised him to the position he held.

Jehangir's health was becoming more and more uncertain, and the burden of government fell almost entirely upon the Empress, who was under no delusion in regard to the gravity of the situation with which she was faced.

Counter-moves by the Empress. Rise of Mahabat Khan.

She felt beyond any doubt that, in order to oppose Shah Jehan with any hope of success, the imperial forces required a leader equal to him in determination of character and military proficiency, and, as her astute mind passed in review all the soldiers who could possibly fill the post, the only one who appeared to answer all requirements was Mahabat Khan, her bitter enemy in the past whom she had been

instrumental in sending into virtual exile as Viceroy of Kabul.

Mahabat, who has hitherto appeared in these pages principally as the man selected by the Emperor to carry out the barbarous sentence of blinding upon Prince Khusru, was by origin a native of Kabul and one of Jehangir's earliest associates when, as Prince Salim, he had revolted against his father.

Mahabat's great personal bravery made him, though a strict Moslem, the idol of the Rajput contingents of the imperial army. The Rajput clansmen from all the different states of Rajputana and Bundelkhand clamoured to be allowed to serve under his banner, and it was Mahabat Khan's custom to surround himself with a bodyguard of 5000 Rajputs. When the order to take up arms against Shah Jehan first reached him, Mahabat was somewhat sceptical as to its real purpose, but when shortly afterwards it was followed by an imperial firman sealed with Nur Jehan's private seal, raising him to the dignity of commander of 6000, he left at once for the Punjab, making one stipulation only, that Asaf Khan, whom he knew to be his bitter enemy, should be removed from the imperial court.

The Empress, knowing that her brother's real sympathies were with his son-in-law Shah Jehan, and that his loyalty to the Emperor was only on the surface, was quite ready to grant this request.

As a result Asaf Khan was sent from Lahore, where the court was in residence, to Agra, where he was given charge of the imperial treasury, and, to all appearance, he submissively accepted the change of position.

The aged Khan-i-Azam, naturally antagonistic to Shah Jehan, whom he looked upon as responsible for the murder of his son-in-law Khusru, was also restored to favour, and appointed a commander of 7000.

In January 1623, Mahabat Khan reached Lahore and immediately assumed command of the imperial army. Two months later, the Emperor and Empress, who had moved the court to Delhi, received information there that Shah Jehan and his troops were camping at the gates of Fathpur Sikri and that his cavalry, led by Raja Bikramajit, had raided the city of Agra.

Jehangir, greatly alarmed at this news, attempted to negotiate with his son and thus bring about a peaceful settlement, but the demands put forward by Shah Jehan were of such a nature as to render this impossible, and on

March 29 the opposing forces came into contact by the village of Bilochpur, near the Jumna.

Defeat of the rebels at Bilochpur.

Both armies consisted entirely of cavalry and were almost equal in number, but Shah Jehan had information that Abdullah Khan Firoz Jang, who commanded the vanguard of the imperial troops, intended to turn traitor to the Emperor, and to desert to his side at the critical moment.

The only person to whom the Prince had revealed this knowledge was Raja Bikramajit, fearing that if it were shared by many it might leak out before its time.

As arranged, Abdullah Khan in due course rode up at the head of 10,000 horsemen to join forces with Shah Jehan, but Darab Khan, the Khan Khanan's son, who had not been let into the secret, and who was commanding a division of Shah Jehan's army, naturally took him to be an enemy and instantly ordered his troops to fire.

Bikramajit realised the mistake, and rode up to Darab Khan to inform him with all possible speed of the true position of affairs, but, as he put his horse to the gallop to return to Shah Jehan's side, he was shot dead by Nawazish Khan, one of the officers whom Abdullah had not initiated into his plot.

The rebels, demoralised by the death of one of their most reliable leaders, fell into a state of utter confusion, and a panic amongst them was only narrowly avoided by the heroism and splendid example of Raja Bhim Singh of Mewar, who succeeded in restoring order.

The imperialists had, however, gained a complete victory, and Shah Jehan, fully realising this, gave the order to his army to retreat to Mandu.

Imperial advance. Shah Jehan's defence.

Jehangir's forces now advanced to Hindaun, where they were reinforced by Prince Parviz with troops from Bihar, after which the imperial army was completely reorganised and a special contingent of 40,000 cavalry, nominally under the command of Prince Parviz, but actually under that of Mahabat Khan, sent to attack the forces which were under Shah Jehan's personal leadership.

A second army, which was ostensibly led by Prince Dawar Bakhsh, the youthful son of Prince Khusru, but over which his grandfather the Khan-i-Azam held the real command, was sent to Gujarat to reinstate the Emperor's sovereignty in Shah Jehan's viceroyalty there.

Arrived under the shelter of the walls of Mandu, Shah Jehan sought to reconstruct his defeated army so as to be

prepared for Mahabat Khan's assault. He employed tactics similar to those so successfully adopted by Malik Ambar and, as the imperial troops advanced, sent forward a body of Mahratta light cavalry to impede their progress by attacking them, cutting off stragglers and plundering their supplies whenever possible.

This system was, however, of no avail as Mahabat's forces found it easy to deal with the raiders, and continued their progress. In addition, Shah Jehan's army, like the Emperor's, included some traitors, amongst them two officers of high rank named Rustam Khan and Barkandaz Khan, whom Mahabat bribed to his side by promises of money and promotion.

Shah Jehan, who was naturally entirely ignorant of their intentions, when marching out to meet the Emperor's troops at the head of the greater part of the army, unwittingly gave Rustam Khan the leadership of the advance guard with Barkandaz as his second in command.

As soon as they came into contact with the enemy both officers, with the entire advance guard, deserted to Mahabat Khan, and, by so doing, forced Shah Jehan to retreat once more.

This betrayal was followed by one of a far more serious nature : letters were intercepted from the Khan Khanan and his sons to the imperial commander, in which they repudiated their obligations to Shah Jehan and tendered their allegiance anew to the Emperor.

Shah Jehan took possession of these letters and, summoning their authors, read them in their presence and, after condemning their conduct in the most violent terms, had them all placed under close arrest.

Disaster upon disaster seemed to befall Shah Jehan at this time. When leaving Mandu on his march to the North, he had appointed as his deputy governor in Gujarat Kunhar Das, brother to the ill-fated Bikramajit ; but on his return there after the battle of Bilochpur he had transferred that important post to Abdullah Khan.

This might possibly have been a wise change, for Abdullah Khan was a bold and able soldier, but, instead of assuming the governorship in person, he himself remained at Mandu and sent a man named Wafadar, who possessed no military knowledge and was a coward besides, to represent him at Ahmedabad. The officers of the garrison, a great number of whom believed Shah Jehan's cause to be lost, thought the best they could do for themselves was to

conclude peace with the Emperor by delivering the capital of Gujarat into his hands.

Shah Jehan's brother-in-law, Diwan Safi, was the prime mover in this revolution and was assisted in his plans by several local *jagirdars*.

Only two of the remaining officers serving in Gujarat kept faith with Shah Jehan ; they were Kunhar Das and Salih Khan, the *Faujdar* or military governor of the town of Petlad. These two, with the assistance of a few servants upon whose loyalty they could depend, carried the contents of the provincial treasury safely from Ahmedabad to Mandu. When they had left, the only person occupying a position of importance whom the conspirators had to face was Wafadar, whose cowardice reduced him to a mere cipher.

Before the break of dawn on the day fixed for the carrying out of their plan, Safi Khan and his confederates rode into the city, their banners flying and kettledrums beating. They occupied the Bhadar, the former royal palace and citadel of the independent Musulman Sultans of Gujarat ; and Wafadar, betrayed by a certain Shaikh Hyder, whose protection he had sought, was arrested and imprisoned.

Gujarat declares for the Emperor.

Meanwhile Abdullah Khan led his troops from Mandu and invaded Gujarat only to find that the Emperor's forces had consolidated their position and been greatly strengthened by the adherence of Kalyan, the Rathor Raja of Idar, and other local Rajput chiefs.

On June 11, 1623, Abdullah Khan's army met with a decisive defeat in the vicinity of the village of Balud, close to the summer residence of the Gujarat kings at Sarkhej, and this resulted in the serious and permanent loss to Shah Jehan of the so-called Garden of Western India with its commercial capital Cambay and all the immense wealth of which this city was the centre.

Abdullah Khan's bad faith towards Jehangir did not, however, extend to his son ; he was sincerely loyal to Shah Jehan and, being a man of infinite resource and audacity, managed, with only the small contingent that remained to him of his original force, to ride to the seaport of Surat, which ranked as the second commercial city in Gujarat and which had not yet been incorporated in the imperial system, and to extort a very considerable sum of money from the wealthy merchants resident there.

With these funds he raised a fresh army, and, placing himself at its head, marched to Burhanpur to join Shah Jehan, who once again had made that city his headquarters.

The Prince at that time had commenced to despair of ever retrieving his fortunes. His troops had been defeated, the rich province from which he had hoped so much was lost to him and, to add to the danger of his position, he knew almost beyond doubt that many amongst his highest officers were preparing to desert him and follow in the footsteps of Rustam, Barkandaz and Safi Khan.

Driven almost to recklessness by the hopeless circumstances in which he now found himself, Shah Jehan, as a last throw, sought, through the agency of his Diwan, Afzul Khan, to conclude an alliance with Malik Ambar, formerly his opponent in the Deccan. The Regent of Ahmednagar received this offer just as he was planning an attack on the neighbouring kingdom of Bijapur, to ensure the success of which it was essential he should gain the assistance of the Emperor Jehangir, although at that moment the Moghul sovereign and Ibrahim Adil Shah were on terms of peace.

Intrigues in the Deccan.

With truly Machiavellian astuteness he declined to ally himself with Shah Jehan but suggested to his envoy that the Prince should seek help from Bijapur, knowing that any alliance between Shah Jehan and Adil Shah would inevitably result in a proposal from the Emperor to Malik Ambar to join forces with him against Bijapur.

The King of Bijapur was not deceived by the trap which was being prepared for him. He received Afzul Khan with great courtesy and accepted all the valuable gifts sent to him by Shah Jehan through his Diwan, but absolutely declined to enter into any kind of political or military agreement with the Prince. Realising his last hope shattered, Shah Jehan decided to open negotiations with the Emperor by the intervention of Prince Parviz and Mahabat Khan.

It is not improbable that Jehangir might, if left to himself, have been willing to meet his son's overtures for peace in a conciliatory spirit, but Nur Jehan remained implacable, and acting under instructions from the court, for which undoubtedly the Empress was responsible, Prince Parviz and Mahabat Khan refused to listen to any of the terms put forward by Shah Jehan until he released the Khan Khanan and despatched him to their headquarters with the full powers of a plenipotentiary. Summoning the aged general, Shah Jehan conducted him to the harem and, in the presence of his beautiful and devoted wife Arjumand Banu Begum and of their eldest son, Prince Dara Shekoh, entreated him to justify the renewal of his trust. With his hand on the Koran, the Khan Khanan took a solemn oath of unswerving

loyalty to Shah Jehan, whose parting words to Abdurrahim were : " My times are hard and my position difficult ; I make myself over to you and make you the guardian of my honour. You must act so that I no longer undergo contempt and confusion." [1]

The liberating of the Khan Khanan, which Prince Parviz and Mahabat Khan had put forward as a basis for negotiation, was, however, a mere decoy ; their real intention, acting upon imperial orders, was to make use of the temporary suspension of hostilities to strike the final blow.

It is more than likely that the Khan Khanan, moved by the prince's touching appeal, started on his mission with the loyal desire to obtain the best possible terms for Shah Jehan, but whatever his intentions, he was not given the chance to carry them out.

Just before he reached the Emperor's camp, the imperial troops crossed the river Narbada and, under cover of the night and in violation of the truce, made a violent attack upon Shah Jehan's army. Taken completely by surprise, the bulk of the prince's soldiers, already greatly discouraged by the fear that their cause was a lost one, broke and fled, some of them deserting to the enemy ; and Abdurrahim, who on his arrival immediately heard of this fresh defeat, thinking any further effort to save Shah Jehan useless, abandoned him and made his own personal peace with the empire.

Flight of Shah Jehan to Golconda.

Defeated and betrayed, the only escape for Shah Jehan and the two faithful beings who stood by him throughout his adversity, his wife Arjumand Banu and his adopted brother Raja Bhim, was to cross the frontier from Khandesh into Golconda and throw themselves on the very questionable mercy of the prince's former enemy the Kutub Shahi king.

But for the devotion of these two staunch hearts, it is probable that even Shah Jehan's proud spirit would have been broken, but his wife's invincible courage in face of the terrible hardships of the flight to Golconda, the cheerfulness which she displayed no matter what privations she was called upon to endure, the tender smile with which she sought to greet her lord, all combined to save him from despair.

The Rajput Bhim's unconquerable faith in ultimate victory made of him a pillar of strength and, as Shah Jehan in the silence of the night lay down to rest and realised that his life and that of his consort were guarded solely by this

[1] Beni Prasad, *History of Jehangir*, chap. xvii. p. 370.

loyal comrade and his small band of Sesodias, his thoughts may have carried him back to that distant day when an instinct of chivalry guided him to plead with his father for favourable terms for Mewar.

In spite of the river Tapti being in flood the fugitives forded it safely, and in October 1623 crossed the frontier into Golconda, where Shah Jehan lost no time in sending proposals for an alliance to the King Mohammed Kutub Shah. The monarch of Golconda was as much averse as were his brother rulers of Bijapur and Ahmednagar from exciting the anger of Mahabat Khan, and merely replied that he would instruct his officials to provision Shah Jehan and his followers with grain and other necessary supplies, on condition that they left the territory of Golconda within fifteen to twenty days.

The Moghul Prince had no choice but to accept this offer and, after consultation with Raja Bhim Singh and Abdullah Khan, who had also accompanied him on his flight, Shah Jehan and his small band started by way of Telingana on a march, the destination of which was to be the Moghul province of Orissa.

Shah Jehan takes refuge in Orissa.

They accomplished the journey with all possible speed, but it was not until November 10 that they reached the fort of Mansurgarh on the frontier dividing Golconda and Orissa.

Recent history of this province.

This province had never been wholly subjugated by the Moghuls in spite of several successive campaigns led by Man Singh during Akbar's reign, and by a general named Hashim Khan, soon after Jehangir's accession to the throne.

Purushottam Deo, a descendant of the ancient Hindu royal house of Orissa, ruled over the wild district of Khurda, which bordered on Golconda, and in which was situated the celebrated Hindu shrine of Jaganath.

Between the years 1611 and 1617 severe fighting had taken place in that district, during which the temple of Jaganath had been besieged and which ended in the annexation of Khurda to the Moghul Empire, Purushottam Deo being reduced from his position as ruler to that of a zemindar, otherwise landowner.

In spite of this victory, however, the Moghul authority was by no means firmly established and, at the very moment of Shah Jehan's arrival on the Orissa frontier, the Oriyas of Khurda had broken into rebellion against the imperial rule.

Shah Jehan himself, but first and foremost the adventurous Raja Bhim, believed that it might be possible to turn this local revolt to their own advantage and, having crossed

the border from Golconda, invited the Oriya zemindars to throw in their lot with theirs.

Ahmed Beg Khan, the imperial Governor of Orissa, who was conducting the operations against Khurda, could, had he adopted a more resolute and courageous attitude, easily have frustrated Shah Jehan's efforts and have sealed his doom, instead of which the unexpected arrival of the fugitive Prince reduced him to a state of panic, and, abandoning the attack on Orissa, he fled to Burdwan in Bengal, leaving his entire governorship at the Prince's mercy.

The minor imperial officials, left in the lurch by their chief, had no hesitation in joining Shah Jehan, as did also the Hindu zemindars, and thus, by a sudden change of fortune, the Prince, until quite recently a wellnigh hopeless refugee, found himself once more the leader of an army of considerable strength.

Shah Jehan advances to Bengal.

Shah Jehan, his confidence restored, now headed for Bengal, and advanced unopposed to Burdwan, where he found that Salih Khan, the *Faujdar* of the town, had prepared it for a siege.

The Prince gave orders for a close investment, and finally Salih Khan and his garrison, after a most gallant defence, were forced to capitulate owing to lack of supplies. A small force was left behind to hold Burdwan, and Shah Jehan, with the remainder of his troops, proceeded to Raj Mahal, the capital of the Bengal Viceroyalty, and called upon the Viceroy, Ibrahim Khan Fath Jang, another brother of the Empress Nur Jehan, to surrender.

The Prince's demand was met with a determined refusal by Ibrahim, who was completely loyal to the Emperor, and who also disposed of an army of considerable strength, a large park of artillery served by Portuguese gunners and a flotilla of war boats on the Ganges.

The success which had attended Shah Jehan from the moment of his arrival in Orissa had brought with it a renewal of all his resourcefulness and strategic skill, and Ibrahim, in spite of his courage and unquestionable capabilities and his strong position, was no match for the Moghul Prince.

The commandant of Shah Jehan's artillery, Rumi Khan, was left behind with a force to invest the fortress of Raj Mahal whilst the Prince, at the head of the main body of the army, marched sufficiently far along the southern bank of the Ganges to escape the risk of encountering the imperial flotilla.

At this point, having, with the assistance of the local

zemindar, obtained a large number of boats, he embarked with his troops, crossed the river and marched back along the northern bank until he reached the opposite bank facing Raj Mahal.

Defeat of the imperial army. Capture of Raj Mahal by Shah Jehan.

This manœuvre took Ibrahim Khan completely by surprise and he promptly decided that his best chance lay in meeting his foe in the open field and, to this purpose, marched forth at the head of his army from Raj Mahal, embarked and crossed the Ganges, where a long battle ensued which ended in a decisive defeat for the imperial troops. To the entreaties of his officers that he should seek refuge in flight, Ibrahim replied : " My life does not need such a course. What can I do better than die on the field of battle ? "[1] True to his word, he fought courageously until mortally wounded.

By order of Rumi Khan, his engineers fired a mine which they had previously laid under the fort, and the breach in the walls caused by the explosion enabled Shah Jehan's troops to get through and attack the city, so that within a few hours Raj Mahal, the capital of Bengal, had passed into their hands. When Shah Jehan had sent the Khan Khanan to negotiate with the imperial commander in the Deccan, he had retained his son Darab Khan as hostage. After demanding from him the solemn oath of fidelity to his cause, the Prince now released him and appointed him Governor of Bengal.

Shah Jehan and his troops then pressed on to Dacca, the principal city of Eastern Bengal, which was occupied without any fighting, and, whilst allowing himself and the main body of his army a brief rest there, he sent a detachment of Rajputs and Moghuls, commanded by Raja Bhim Singh, to invade the governorship of Prince Parviz, the neighbouring province of Bihar.

In the Governor's absence, the Diwan, Mukhlis Khan, acted as his deputy, and he found himself at a great disadvantage, owing to the fact that a considerable number of troops habitually forming the provincial garrison had accompanied Prince Parviz to Western India. Seized with panic, the Deputy Governor and his chief officers abandoned their posts and fled to Allahabad, leaving Bhim Singh to enter Patna without firing a shot.

This bloodless victory was followed by the surrender, at the hands of the imperial Governor, of the fortress of Rohtas to Raja Bhim and by the leading Hindu chief of Bihar, Pertab Singh Raja of Bhojpur, joining Shah Jehan's cause.

[1] Beni Prasad, *History of Jehangir*, chap. xviii. p. 379.

Shah Jehan marches northwards.

The Moghul Prince now found himself supreme master of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and, with the formidable army under his command, felt justified in leading his troops to Oudh, Agra and the North, in order to strike at the very centre of the imperial power.

For this purpose he divided his army into three portions ; one with an officer named Darya Khan at its head was despatched against the town of Manikpur in Oudh ; the second, under the joint command of Raja Bhim Singh and Abdullah Khan, was instructed to capture Allahabad ; whilst the third, under the personal leadership of Shah Jehan, was to advance on Jaunpur.

Jaunpur, approached from the banks of the Upper Ganges, was occupied without resistance by Shah Jehan and his troops, and Darya Khan was equally successful at Manikpur. Raja Bhim Singh, however, and Abdullah Khan, whose joint task was by far the most difficult, were unable to carry it out, and suffered what eventually proved to be a definite reverse. They occupied the city of Allahabad without any opposition, but having done so found their farther progress barred by Rustam Khan, the imperial Governor, who had withdrawn with his troops behind the strong ramparts of the great fort built by Akbar at the Tribeni, or confluence of the Ganges and the Jumna. This clever move on the part of Rustam Khan brought about the turning-point in the struggle between the Emperor and his son, for it allowed Prince Parviz and Mahabat Khan, whom Jehangir had summoned from the Deccan, time to bring their troops to his assistance in the North. Before leaving the Deccan the governorship of Khandesh was conferred by Mahabat Khan on Ratan Hara, Rao Raja of Bundi, a worthy descendant of a famous line, and an alliance, which still further ensured the imperial possessions in that part, was concluded with Bijapur, after which the two commanders commenced their advance in response to the Emperor's call.

Imperial counter-offensive.

As soon as Raja Bhim Singh and Abdullah Khan obtained information of the imperial army's approach from the Deccan, they deemed it expedient to raise the siege of the fort of Allahabad and rejoin Shah Jehan and the main body of his troops then encamped at the village of Kampat near Jaunpur on the other side of the Ganges.

Darya Khan and his army shortly afterwards arrived at the same spot, and Shah Jehan with his entire force now entrenched themselves and, mounting their artillery on especially constructed redoubts, awaited the imperial attack.

Success of Mahabat Khan.

The Prince had also the support of the flotilla of boats, which had been so useful to him in his operations against Raj Mahal, and, in addition, had commandeered every available vessel on his line of march along the Upper Gangetic Valley ; but, in spite of all these measures, he was outwitted by his principal opponent Mahabat Khan, who, besides being a great soldier, was also fully conversant with the methods of diplomacy most likely to be successful when dealing with the different Eastern zemindars who had joined the rebels. He sent letters to the local landowners of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, threatening them with severe punishment if they continued to support Shah Jehan's cause ; on the other hand, assuring them of a free pardon in the Emperor's name, if they immediately renewed their submission to the imperial government. As a result, they deserted the prince in a body and, taking their boats with them, returned to their own homes.

Shah Jehan's army was by this defection reduced to a total force of 10,000 men and his position was therefore a very grave one in face of the rapid advance of the Emperor's troops, which outnumbered them by 30,000.

Shah Jehan's council of war.

In his almost hopeless predicament, Shah Jehan sought the advice of his chief officers as to the best course to pursue.

Abdullah Khan, Darya Khan and almost all Shah Jehan's Moslem officers declared in favour of promptly abandoning the entrenchments at Kampat and avoiding contact with the imperial army by making a sudden raid northwards in the direction of Delhi. Should Mahabat's army forestall this plan by catching them up, the council advised retreating to their original starting-point in the Deccan.

The only one to disagree with this prudent strategy was the reckless and heroic Raja Bhim Singh, who, nurtured in the Rajput school of open and frequently desperate warfare, hotly exclaimed that, were such contemptible tactics adopted, he and his Sesodias would forthwith return to Mewar. He strongly advocated awaiting Mahabat Khan's onslaught where they stood and engaging in a pitched battle with their opponents, and Shah Jehan, blinded by his admiration and affection for his friend, abandoned his wonted caution and agreed to follow his advice.

As the Emperor's forces drew near, Shah Jehan gave orders for the dismantling of the guns from their redoubts so as to make them available for service in the open field, and then rallied his small army for the fight, the issue of which was a foregone conclusion.

Battle of Kampat and defeat of Shah Jehan.

All the bravery of Shah Jehan's soldiers, and the great skill with which Rumi Khan and his artillerymen served their guns were of no avail against the numerical superiority of the opposing army, who soon succeeded in completely surrounding them.

The slender forces, their ranks swept by showers of arrows and fierce matchlock fire, continued to fight with exemplary heroism until completely overpowered. The day ended in utter disaster to the cause of Shah Jehan and in the death of the gallant Bhim Singh, who fell covered with wounds, as did most of his clansmen, thus paying their country's debt to the Prince.

Shah Jehan, his horse wounded under him, once more sought refuge in flight through Orissa and, placing himself under the protection of the King of Golconda, was allowed to pass through his territory in safety.

Alliance with Malik Ambar.

Having reached the frontier, he crossed it and entered Ahmednagar, where he found no difficulty in concluding an alliance with Malik Ambar, for the simple reason that the Regent of Ahmednagar was anxious to secure his co-operation against the empire and Bijapur.

As had always been his intention, Malik Ambar had, immediately after the departure of Mahabat Khan and his army to attack Shah Jehan, invaded Bijapur with the result that the Adil Shah, in accordance with the treaty concluded with Mahabat Khan, appealed to the imperial government for assistance and, shortly afterwards, was reinforced by Moghul troops from the garrison of Burhanpur. The moment of Shah Jehan's arrival in the Deccan seemed a most favourable one, for Malik Ambar had shortly before inflicted a crushing defeat on the allied forces at Bhaturi, near Ahmednagar, had captured the important town of Sholapur and was besieging Ibrahim Adil Shah in his own capital.

The King of Golconda had joined the alliance between Shah Jehan and the Regent of Ahmednagar, and, after a careful consideration of the position, it was thought best that the Moghul Prince should proceed with reinforcements to Burhanpur to the assistance of a Nizam Shahi army, which was closely besieging the imperial Governor, the brave and loyal Raja of Bundi, and his garrison.

Every effort to capture the city by assault failed owing to the magnificent defence put up by the Prince of Bundi and his clansmen, a defence so heroic in character that, up to the present day, the Hara bards glorify it in their chants and do

honour to Rao Ratan's loyalty to his suzerain. Realising that this method was of no avail, Shah Jehan was preparing a different plan of procedure when the news that the victorious imperial army, under the joint command of Prince Parviz and Mahabat Khan, had entered Khandesh and was rapidly advancing on Burhanpur, compelled him to raise the siege. Reduced once more to a condition of hopelessness, Shah Jehan, attended only by four hundred followers, retired to Rohangarh in the Balaghat. To add to the bitterness of this fresh misfortune, Abdullah Khan, who had up to that moment shared loyally all the vicissitudes of his career, now announced his intention to abandon the life of warfare in favour of one of religious meditation as a fakir at Indore. Shah Jehan's many devoted friends had all left him, some of their free will, others through force of circumstances ; and of his many possessions in the Deccan there now remained only Asirgarh. He was consumed also with anxiety for the fate of his beloved wife Arjumand Banu Begum, who, with her infant son, Prince Murad Bakhsh, was isolated in the fortress of Rohtas in Bihar. The hardship of this separation from his wife and child, coupled with the knowledge that the fortress which gave them shelter was practically surrounded by the imperial troops, seems more than all else to have broken Shah Jehan's final resistance, and, as a result, he wrote a letter to his father offering unconditional surrender. Owing to his steadily failing health, Jehangir's power in regard to the government of the empire was almost entirely vested in Nur Jehan, but time had brought about a change in her attitude towards Shah Jehan, and, though her desire and hope to secure the succession for Shahriyar remained as keen as ever, she realised that it would be unwise to influence the Emperor adversely, as she had done on the occasion of Shah Jehan's first offer of submission, for the simple reason that she might at any moment feel dependent upon the Prince for active support against Mahabat Khan, whose true character she had come of late to understand. In spite of the high honours which had accrued to Mahabat Khan through her influence, Nur Jehan knew beyond all doubt that he still hated her and would, wherever possible, do his utmost to undermine her power. The Empress now approached the Emperor on behalf of Shah Jehan in a conciliatory spirit, and Jehangir's anger, to which he had given expression during the whole of the three years of his son's rebellion by commanding that he should figure in all the official dispatches under the name of

Submission of Shah Jehan. Reconciliation with the Emperor.

" Bidaulat " (The Wretch), soon evaporated and made way for a return of that affection which, in his heart, he had never ceased to cherish for the Prince. He sent a letter to Shah Jehan granting him his full forgiveness and bestowing upon him the district of Balaghat on condition that he surrendered the fortresses of Rohtas and Asirgarh and that he sent his eldest and third sons, named respectively Dara Shekoh and Aurangzeb, as hostages to his court. Shah Jehan, who had been prepared for terms of a much sterner nature, accepted these without hesitation, and within a few weeks was, to his inexpressible joy, rejoined by Arjumand Banu and the infant Prince Murad Bakhsh : Prince Dara, then ten years of age, and Prince Aurangzeb, two years his junior, whose fate it was later on to play such tragic parts in Indian history, were sent under escort to the imperial court, where Nur Jehan, under whose care they were placed, received and treated them with the greatest possible kindness. Shah Jehan, his wife, his second son, Prince Shuja, and the infant Murad Bakhsh proceeded to the Hindu sacred city of Nasik, where they for the time being took up their abode.

The Empress's ever-growing distrust of Mahabat Khan was only too well justified and, what greatly added to the danger was the fact that during the time of his close and constant association with Prince Parviz in their joint command, he had gained a very great personal influence over the weak and conceited young prince by skilfully playing upon his vanity and attributing the victories due to his own military efficiency to the incompetent power of Parviz, whose command had, in point of fact, been only nominal. Jehangir's increasing ill-health was known to Mahabat through the agents he employed at the court, who went as far as to predict an early death. Believing Shah Jehan, by reason of his recent rebellion, to have permanently forfeited all rights to the throne, Mahabat now evolved the daring project of putting an end to Nur Jehan's power in the future by raising Parviz to the throne in place of his brother Shahriyar, whose succession she continued to desire. This plot was no secret to the Empress, and, as a first measure towards its frustration, she issued a firman which appointed Mahabat Khan Viceroy of Bengal and commanded, at the same time, that Prince Parviz should remain at Burhanpur ; she coupled with it the information that Khan Jehan, the former Viceroy of the Punjab, would be sent to assist him in place of Mahabat Khan. Although Prince Parviz

attempted to protest against this change he was not in a position to show open revolt, and in due course Mahabat Khan left for Bengal. This was only the preliminary to the Empress's real offensive against the enemy she feared; it was followed shortly afterwards by a firman, sent at her instigation by the Emperor to Mahabat, in which the general was summoned to the court to answer an accusation of retaining for his own use the elephants captured from Shah Jehan in Bengal, and of appropriating a large portion of the revenues of that province. Mahabat Khan instantly sent the elephants to the court, then in residence at Lahore, and, simultaneously, a reply couched in terms of the greatest humility saying that he would, in the shortest possible time, appear before his sovereign. This apparent meekness was, however, only a cloak for Mahabat Khan's real intentions, and in the month of March 1626, when the Emperor and Empress were in camp on the banks of the river Jhelum, on their way to spend the summer months in the cool climate of Kabul, the wily general suddenly appeared surrounded by a bodyguard of 5000 Rajputs.

Capture of Jehangir and Nur Jehan by Mahabat Khan.

Meanwhile, the fact that Mahabat Khan had not immediately answered the imperial summons to appear before Jehangir had resulted in his relations with the court becoming increasingly strained, and when he arrived at the camp he received the stern order not to seek an audience with the sovereign until the Emperor sent him the command to appear.

In spite of this Asaf Khan, Nur Jehan's brother, who was in charge of the camp, acted with quite inexplicable want of foresight, for, instead of providing for the additional protection of the Emperor and Empress, he so arranged it that the imperial couple were practically isolated, the river being between them and the troops whose duty it was to guard them.

A few days later when at dawn the Bakshi (Minister of War), Motamid Khan by name, was making his round of inspection of the camp, he was startled by cries of alarm proceeding from it and, to his utter consternation, beheld Mahabat Khan, attended by his entire bodyguard, ride into the camp, making straight for the entrance to the imperial tents. Here he dismounted, and pushing aside Motamid Khan, who attempted personally to stop him until a hurriedly sent warning could reach the Emperor, continued his progress through the imperial bathroom to the inner apartments occupied by Jehangir.

The unwonted tumult had startled the Emperor and

brought him face to face with Mahabat Khan, who, salaaming with mock humility, exclaimed, "I have assured myself that escape from the malice and implacable hatred of Asaf Khan is impossible and that I shall be put to death in shame and ignominy. I have therefore boldly and presumptuously thrown myself upon your Majesty's protection. If I deserve death or punishment, give the order that I may suffer it in your presence."[1] These hypocritical words had scarcely been spoken when the Rajputs accompanying him swarmed into the tent and, though still preserving a certain degree of courtesy, forced the Emperor to mount one of the general's elephants.

Several of Jehangir's officers made an attempt to accompany them, but were unsuccessful, two of them paying for their loyalty with their lives ; and the Emperor, surrounded by armed Rajputs, was conveyed as a prisoner to Mahabat Khan's camp.

The Empress, as soon as the terrible news reached her, rose to the occasion and, whilst many members of the imperial court wailed aloud and wrung their hands, she preserved her presence of mind and immediately sought for means to affect Jehangir's release. Disguising herself as a woman of the poorer classes, and accompanied only by one attendant, she passed unobserved to the farther side of the river and reached the quarters occupied by her brother Asaf Khan, where a council of the leading nobles immediately took place.

Addressing Asaf Khan with great vehemence Nur Jehan reproached him in the following words, for his disregard of the Emperor's safety.

"This has happened through your neglect and stupid arrangements. What never entered into the imagination of any one has come to pass, and now you stand stricken with shame for your conduct before God and man. You must do your best to repair this evil, and advise what course to pursue."[1]

After a long and earnest debate the council arrived at the conclusion that on the morrow the imperial troops, under the personal command of the Empress, should cross the Jhelum and make an attempt to rescue Jehangir by force of arms.

One of Nur Jehan's devoted personal supporters named Fidai Khan, fearing the danger for the Empress which this enterprise involved, tried to forestall it and with a few of his

[1] *Motamid Khan, Ikbal Namah-i-Jehangiri*, Elliot, vol. vi. p. 424.

retainers, to help the Emperor to escape before she could put it into execution.

Although the only bridge in the near vicinity had been destroyed, they endeavoured to ford the Jhelum on horseback, but six of the intrepid little band met their death by drowning in the icy waters of the river.

Fidai Khan and seven others reached the opposite bank in safety and made a gallant attempt to fight their way through to the tent in which the Emperor was imprisoned, but they were helpless in face of the large number of troops surrounding the camp and finally had to desist and recross the river to the Empress's quarters.

Next day Nur Jehan's plan was carried out as arranged in council and the entire imperial force moved out, headed by the Empress who, clad in armour and mounted on an elephant, led the charge in person.

In the howdah beside her was Prince Shahriyar's infant daughter in the arms of her nurse, the Empress probably fearing to leave the child behind without protection.

In spite of a storm of arrows and matchlock bullets Nur Jehan and her troops forded the river in safety and landed on the opposite bank, when the struggle became more and more intense.

The Empress, always in the thickest of the fray, had her elephant wounded by two sword-cuts in the trunk, and an arrow pierced the arm of the little princess's nurse. The Empress calmly extracted the arrow, bound up the injured limb and simultaneously continued in a clear and unfaltering voice to give the words of command to her soldiers.

At one moment success seemed assured. A party under the leadership of Fidai Khan forced its way almost into the Emperor's prison, but Mahabat's organisation was too perfect in every detail and ultimately the Empress and her army were compelled to recross the Jhelum.

Still Nur Jehan did not lose heart ; her one thought was to be at the Emperor's side, for she felt that, with his constantly increasing ill-health and without her moral support, he would be totally unable to make a successful struggle against the overbearing personality of Mahabat Khan.

Dismissing her soldiers and disregarding all personal danger she staked everything upon a bold stroke, proceeded to Mahabat Khan's camp and, without any parleying, demanded to be allowed to share the Emperor's captivity.

For once Mahabat's shrewdness failed him and, believing

that his position would be all the stronger if Nur Jehan were also his prisoner, he readily consented and, under the escort of Mahabat Khan's Rajputs, the Emperor and Empress started on their journey to Kabul.

Shah Jehan's attempt at rescue.

The news of the Emperor's captivity was gradually spreading throughout the empire and had penetrated to Shah Jehan at his residence in Nasik; and the Prince, though at that moment having only a thousand men under arms, decided immediately to make an attempt to rescue his father. In the hope of gathering reinforcements on his march, Shah Jehan proceeded northward, by way of Ajmere, Jodhpur and Jaisalmir, to the fortress of Tatta in Sind, but misfortune still seemed to dog his footsteps.

Kishan Singh, who had remained with the Prince after the death in the battle of Kampat of his gallant father Raja Bhim, succumbed to sudden illness during the halt at Ajmere, and his clansmen, who represented quite half of Shah Jehan's total force, finding themselves bereft of their feudal chief, insisted upon returning forthwith to their homes. On arrival at Tatta further disappointment awaited him inasmuch as he found his bitter personal enemy Sharif-ul-Mulk, who had commanded Shahriyar's troops at Dholpur, to be in charge of the fortress, and could not therefore hope to enlist recruits for his own army. Shah Jehan, who was in addition suffering from an attack of fever, which had considerably weakened him, realising that any attempt to go to the Emperor's assistance under existing circumstances and with so minute a force would be doomed to failure, retraced his footsteps by the way he had come and sought refuge for the time being in Udaipur, the capital of Mewar.

There he was warmly welcomed by Karan Singh, who had in 1620 succeeded his father Amar Singh as Maharana, and who, with true nobility of character, showered kindness upon the man who, previously a conqueror, now came to claim his protection. A small marble palace designed in the Mohammedan style of architecture with a special mosque attached to it, dedicated to a Moslem saint, was built for him on one of the islands in the beautiful Peshola Lake and, in this peaceful retreat, Shah Jehan remained for some months until, feeling fully restored to health, he returned via Gujarat to his residence at Nasik.

Meanwhile the Emperor and Empress had been conveyed by Mahabat Khan to Kabul, where he likewise took up his abode to watch over the captives, but, though defeated by

him in the field and with her consort a prisoner in his hands, Nur Jehan from the moment of her arrival in Afghanistan set her great intelligence and quick intuition to outwit his cunning and power by playing upon the feelings of the Moslem soldiers of the city garrison. They and the fanatical Afghan population hated Mahabat's Rajputs, whom they looked upon as " idolaters " and whose haughty demeanour angered them greatly. Encouraged in this attitude by Nur Jehan's agents, a violent fight took place between a body of Moslem cavalry and the Hindus, in which nine hundred Rajputs, the flower of Mahabat Khan's forces, met their death. This fight was the signal for the storm, which had long been brewing, to burst forth. The Afghans rose in a body against the Rajputs, and, although Mahabat Khan eventually succeeded in restoring quiet, the basis of his power, which lay in the strength of his army, was definitely destroyed. Five hundred of his Rajputs had escaped death only to be captured by wild tribes in the vicinity of Kabul and sold as slaves to the Kafirs of the Hindu Kush ; and Mahabat Khan began to realise that his own safety was at stake and that it would be wise to move with the court from Afghanistan to Lahore. Shortly afterwards he received a further blow by the news of the death in the Deccan of Prince Parviz from illness due to his habitual intemperance. The Empress was slowly and surely evolving the diplomatic scheme by which she hoped so to dupe her enemy as to regain Jehangir's liberty and her own.

Jehangir and Nur Jehan prisoners at Kabul.

She persuaded the Emperor to represent her in a new light to Mahabat Khan, to tell him that he now knew her protestations of devoted wifely affection to be false and merely the cloak under which she sought to hide her sole aim, that of usurping entirely all power in the state ; assuring him that with this knowledge had come complete estrangement. Further, she prevailed upon Jehangir to adopt an attitude of intense gratitude towards Mahabat and to pretend that he now recognised in him a faithful servant who had, all along, wished to free his sovereign from the machinations of his ambitious consort and also that he felt it his duty to warn him that Nur Jehan's hatred of him would stop at nothing that could possibly bring about his downfall. Mahabat was caught in the net so adroitly woven and, convinced of the Emperor's sincerity, he practically relaxed all precautions and left him almost unguarded during the whole of the march towards Lahore. The Empress's agents, who accompanied the court, were busily engaged in

enrolling troops and assuring themselves of the support of the local *jagirdars* and of most of the nobles who had formed part of the imperial suite at Kabul. When at length the imperial tents had been pitched within a day's march of the frontier fortress of Rohtas, Nur Jehan believed the time for action had arrived. By her desire the Emperor sent an officer to Mahabat Khan begging him, as the Empress wished to hold a review of her own small force of guards, to avoid any possible collision with his troops by marching a stage farther on the journey, where he undertook the imperial court would join him as soon as the review was over. Mahabat Khan now awoke to the real state of affairs and, striking his tents, led his men towards Rohtas. The Empress delayed no further and, as soon as he and his troops had departed, she gave the word of command and her cavalry, reinforced by contingents supplied by the local *jagirdars*, rode into the imperial camp and set Jehangir free.

Escape of the royal prisoners.

Mahabat, informed by his scouts of what had happened, fled under the protection of two thousand horsemen into Mewar, where, for some weeks, he lived as a fugitive amongst the Bhils of the Aravallis. Eventually he sent a reliable officer to Shah Jehan in the Deccan with a letter in which he begged his forgiveness for having previously opposed him and asked to be permitted to enter his service.

Shah Jehan, whose outlook at that time was heavy with uncertainty, readily accepted the assistance of so skilled a soldier, and Mahabat proceeded through Gujarat to the Deccan and joined the Prince in the fortress of Junnar, where he had taken up his residence after the death of his brother Parviz.

The Emperor and Empress continued their progress to Rohtas and thence to Lahore, which they entered in state, but, simultaneously with the arrival of the court in the Punjab capital, it became obvious to all that the terrible strain he had been living under had brought about an alarming change for the worse in Jehangir's health. Suffering tortures from constant attacks of asthma, he refused food almost entirely and tried to keep up his waning strength by indulging in large quantities of wine, with very unsatisfactory results.

Last days and death of Jehangir.

He longed with the sudden intensity of a sick man to exchange the heat and dust of Lahore for the beautiful cool Valley of Kashmir with its shady gardens and splashing fountains, which recalled the first years of his married life with Nur Jehan and the gay water parties and brilliant

courts of those happy days. In fulfilment of this desire, the court moved to Kashmir in March 1627, but even the change to this perfect climate could not bring about any permanent improvement in the Emperor's health. They remained in the Valley until the end of October, when they started upon their homeward journey to Lahore. When passing the village of Bairam Kala, in the neighbourhood of which Jehangir possessed a hunting-box, he suddenly felt a wish to indulge once more in his favourite pursuit. All preparations were made and the Emperor seemed to be enjoying the sport, until a terrible accident occurred to one of his attendants, who tripped when picking up the game and, falling over the edge of a precipice, was dashed to pieces in the chasm below. The impression produced upon the sick man by this tragedy undoubtedly hastened his death. Believing himself in part responsible for the fate of his servant, he looked upon it as an omen of his own approaching end. He refused all food and, gradually becoming weaker, passed away on October 28, 1627, near a place called Rajauri at the entrance to the Valley of Kashmir.

As death drew near, Nur Jehan supported him with her strength, a true and devoted companion to the very end, who, though frequently unjust in her behaviour to others, had never failed the man whom, in spite of all his weaknesses, she sincerely loved.

CHAPTER IV

KING OF THE WORLD, A.D. 1627–1659

Interregnum. Imprisonment of Nur Jehan. Civil war in the North.

THE death of the Emperor Jehangir was the signal for the ever-latent antagonism between the Empress and her eldest brother to break out afresh.

Asaf Khan had never at heart ceased to sympathise with his son-in-law, though he had been too cautious openly to support Shah Jehan in his rebellion against his father, but now that the throne was vacant, he acted with all promptitude in order to secure the succession for the Prince.

Almost immediately after the Emperor had expired, Nur Jehan's tents were surrounded by Asaf Khan's soldiers, making her to all intents and purposes a prisoner, and the two youthful hostages, Dara Shekoh and Aurangzeb, were taken from her custody and handed over to her brother. Asaf Khan at the same time sent a runner to Shah Jehan at Junnar to acquaint him with his father's death, and accompanied this message with his signet ring to be handed to the Prince as a pledge of his good faith and requesting him to march with all haste to Agra.

In spite of the promptitude with which he acted, Asaf Khan found himself in a position which was far from secure, for Shah Jehan was far away in the Deccan and his rival, Shahriyar, was at that moment residing at Lahore, and therefore within very easy reach of Delhi and Agra.

Fully alive to the danger of Shahriyar being proclaimed Emperor before Shah Jehan had time to arrive, Asaf Khan, who had become Prime Minister after the fall of Mahabat Khan, conceived the plan of forestalling any such attempt by temporarily placing on the throne Prince Dawar Bakhsh, son of the ill-fated Khusru, and in the presence of the assembled nobles proclaiming him Emperor.

Nur Jehan had, however, contrived to send an urgent message to Prince Shahriyar, imploring him to proceed to her assistance ; and, encouraged by his wife, Ladili Begum, he for once threw aside his habitual indolence and, having assured himself of the support of the local garrison, seized the fort and the treasury and proclaimed himself Emperor.

He appointed as commander of his army Mirza Baisanghar, eldest son of the late Prince Danyal, who, with his brothers Tahmuras and Hoshang, had fled from the imperial camp and joined him. Mirza Baisanghar placed himself at the head of a force largely composed of untrained levies recruited from the population of Lahore and the peasantry of the surrounding districts, and moved forward to meet the troops of Asaf Khan, who were rapidly advancing. The opposing forces met on the banks of the Ravi, a few miles distant from Lahore, but at the firing of the first shot Shahriyar's raw recruits fled panic-stricken, and the Prince himself, on hearing this, sought refuge from Asaf Khan's expected attack behind the strong walls of the Lahore Fort. Asaf Khan in this instance, however, abstained from any attempt to use force in the accomplishment of his aim. No sooner had he arrived at Lahore than he entered into secret negotiations with some of the Prince's disaffected officers, and as a result they admitted one of Asaf Khan's nobles, who was also one of the commanders of his forces, through a postern gate into the fort at night. In the early hours of the morning large numbers of the garrison, won over by him, broke into revolt, and, acting under his instructions, threw open the fort to Asaf Khan and his men.

They came upon the unhappy Shahriyar and his cousins, Prince Danyal's sons, in the harem of the imperial palace, where they had sought refuge and whence they were marched into the presence of Dawar Bakhsh, who was holding audience in the Diwan-i-Am, and were forced to prostrate themselves before him. After this humiliation they were thrown into the dungeons of the fort, and a few days later the terrible fate of blinding finally ended Shahriyar's chances of succeeding to the throne.

Shortly after the capture of Lahore, the funeral procession with the body of the Emperor Jehangir, escorted by another detachment of Asaf Khan's troops, who had in Kashmir acted as guards to the Empress in her imprisonment, reached the gates of the city and the mortal remains of the late sovereign were laid to rest in the beautiful Garden

of Dilkusha or Heart's Delight, originally designed by Nur Jehan and carried out under her instructions at Shahdera, a suburb of Lahore.

When the obsequies had duly taken place, Asaf Khan and his army accompanied Dawar Bakhsh in state to Agra, where he was again formally proclaimed Emperor. The Hindu runner named Banarasi, whom Asaf Khan had sent from Kashmir to the Deccan to convey the news of Jehangir's death to Shah Jehan, had accomplished the long distance to Junnar in twenty days, and had also handed over the signet ring with which his master had entrusted him to the Prince.

Shah Jehan departs for the North.

After devoting the prescribed four days to the mourning rites, Shah Jehan, attended by Mahabat Khan, started for Agra by way of Gujarat. The gates of Ahmedabad were thrown open to him and, with an additional large contingent of the provincial troops, he continued his march to Mewar, where he was accorded a magnificent reception by Maharana Karan Singh and all the leading vassals of the kingdom, who every one tendered him their solemn allegiance as Jehangir's heir. From Mewar the Prince and his troops marched through Ajmere and advanced rapidly towards Agra, where Dawar Bakhsh, a pitiful figure, totally ignorant of his own peril, resided in the midst of the splendours of the phantom sovereignty to which he had been called.

As rumours of the near approach of Shah Jehan upon the capital reached his ears, the puppet monarch's suspicions were aroused, but this possibility had also been foreseen by Asaf Khan, who had kept in secret communication with Shah Jehan throughout his advance and, being fully prepared for every eventuality, had given him instructions how to act. When a few miles distant from Agra, Shah Jehan gave his army orders to halt and, stricken apparently with severe illness, retired to his tent.

After the troops had remained encamped for several days, they were informed by Mahabat Khan, who seemed visibly affected, that the Prince had succumbed to his illness and had, in his last moments, expressed the wish to be buried in the close vicinity of Agra.

Dawar Bakhsh, to whom the news of Shah Jehan's death was sent, together with his request as to his burial, now felt wholly secure on the throne and readily granted Asaf Khan permission to escort his son-in-law's body to its last self-selected resting-place.

Asaf Khan, with a strong force of cavalry, rode out from

the city and met the funeral procession a few miles distant from the gates.

It was all a matter of a few moments during which a significant glance was exchanged between Asaf Khan and his former enemy Mahabat, who, acting the part of chief mourner, walked immediately behind the bier, and at a given signal from him the servants who bore the coffin flung aside the covering pall and Shah Jehan, vigorous and in the flush of health, emerged amidst the enthusiastic acclamations of the assembled soldiers.

The deep note of the kettledrums mingled with shouts of "Long live Shah Jehan!" sounded from under the walls of the fort as the vain and foolish Dawar Bakhsh sat feasting in the palace of Agra amongst his nautch girls.

The cry was instantly echoed by the soldiers on guard at the fort gates, who threw them open to the joint forces of Asaf and Mahabat, and a few moments later the unhappy victim of Asaf's cunning passed from the brilliancy of the throne to the gloom of the dungeon.

Accession of Shah Jehan.

At dawn on the following day, February 6, 1628, Shah Jehan made his state entry into Agra and, after taking his seat upon the throne in the Diwan-i-Am, was unanimously acclaimed as Emperor by all the assembled nobles, but, as though to illustrate the Eastern proverb "kingship knows no kinship", the new sovereign marked his accession by a most barbarous act. By his orders Dawar Bakhsh, the two sons of Prince Danyal and the blind Shahriyar were all mercilessly put to death.

In striking contrast to this ruthless act was the new Emperor's chivalrous treatment of his stepmother. In the hour of his supreme triumph Shah Jehan cast aside all recollections of the later years of his father's reign, when Nur Jehan had used her influence to bring about his downfall, and allowed his memory to carry him back to the early and brightest period of Jehangir's rule, when he and his stepmother had worked together harmoniously for the glory of the empire.

He ordered her immediate release, granted her an annual pension of two lakhs of rupees and a residence in the city of Lahore where she and her widowed daughter Ladili Begum dwelt together; and henceforth the Empress, never wearing any other colour than white, a sign of perpetual mourning, devoted herself entirely to works of charity.

Shah Jehan's position at the time of his accession was an exceptionally strong one, for there was not a single rival left

to threaten him in his path. The Moghul nobles of his court and his army were impressed alike by his fame as a soldier and by his administrative gifts; and his magnanimous treatment of Mewar, added to the fact that Rajput blood flowed in his veins, naturally gained for him the allegiance of the Rajput feudatories of the empire.

The firmness and scrupulous justice which had been such outstanding features of his rule in Gujarat and Khandesh were now displayed equally in his methods of government over the whole of his empire.

The following anecdote gives a striking illustration of the Emperor's views: On one occasion when he was leaving the palace on horseback for a day's hunting, a servant of one of the great nobles of the court prostrated himself at his feet and begged him to intervene with his master, who had not paid him for several months past. Shah Jehan instantly sent a summons to the noble and made the servant repeat his charge in his presence; the former, being unable to deny it, was ordered to dismount and to hand over the reins of his horse to the servant. The Emperor then started on his hunting expedition; the servant, mounted on his master's steed, followed with the remainder of the imperial suite, whilst the unfortunate noble had to perform the prescribed duty of the menial and run in front of the hoofs of his own horse. Finally, exhausted by the strenuous exercise, he fell half fainting to the ground, and the Emperor grimly remarked: "I do not fail to pay you because you serve me; it is equally just that you should pay those who serve you".[1]

Shah Jehan, realising fully that he had gained the throne principally owing to the support of Asaf Khan and Mahabat Khan, who had until recently been at enmity with each other, signalised his accession by confirming his father-in-law in his office of Prime Minister and simultaneously by creating Mahabat Khan Khan Khanan with the added dignity of Sipah Salar or Commander-in-Chief.

War in the Deccan.

Shah Jehan's rule was firmly established over the greater part of the empire, but on the remote horizon of the Deccan the storm clouds were gathering once again. When Jehangir recalled Mahabat Khan from the Deccan, he had appointed in his place Salabat Khan, known from that moment under the name of Khan Jehan, the man who had pleaded for mercy for some of those concerned in the plot against the

[1] Niccolao Manucci, *Storia do Mogor*, vol. i. p. 201.

Emperor's life on the occasion of the sovereign's return to India from Kabul.

Khan Jehan, an Afghan by birth and a descendant of the imperial dynasty of Lodi, had never wavered in his loyalty to Jehangir during that monarch's entire reign, but for some inexplicable reason, far from entertaining the same feelings towards his heir, he disliked Shah Jehan intensely.

At the time of the Emperor's death, Khan Jehan was the acting Viceroy in Khandesh and in the Moghul Deccan, which post had become vacant owing to the decease of Prince Parviz, and when the succession of Shah Jehan had been established beyond doubt, the viceroy, greatly encouraged by a certain number of his Afghan officers, raised the standard of revolt with the object of bringing about the restoration of the imperial house of Lodi, and vesting the sovereignty in his own person.

To gain support for his cause, he despatched an envoy to Khadki, the capital of the Nizam Shahi sultanate, with proposals to Murtaza Nizam Shah for an offensive and defensive alliance, offering, if he would agree to this, to cede him the entire Balaghat and the fortress of Ahmednagar. Great changes had taken place in the Nazim Shahi kingdom since the death, in 1626, of the Regent Malik Ambar, who had been succeeded in that post by his son Fateh Khan, but whose regency now legally came to an end as King Murtaza had attained his majority. Fateh Khan, though he lacked both his father's ability and spirit of patriotism, was equally ambitious, and most cordially welcomed the proposals made by Khan Jehan.

By the latter's command the Moghul district officers in the Balaghat immediately gave up their posts to the Nizam Shahi representatives, with the sole exception of Sipahdar Khan, the Governor of Ahmednagar, who, faithful to his trust, refused to surrender the fortress.

The treaty of alliance having been duly signed, Khan Jehan left his headquarters at Burhanpur and led his troops into Malwa, where the capital, Mandu, was occupied and the Governor, Muzaffar Khan, placed under arrest.

It was at this moment that the rebel leader received news of the formal accession of Shah Jehan to the imperial throne, and the proclamation of this event completely changed Khan Jehan's plans and wrecked his prospects of greatness.

Serving under his banner when he held the viceroyalty of Khandesh were Maharaja Gaj Singh of Marwar and Mirza-

Raja[1] Jai Singh of Amber, who was destined in later years to play a leading part at the Moghul court.

Both these great *Mansabdars* of the empire, from the moment that Shah Jehan had formally succeeded to the throne, accepted him as their legitimate suzerain and, assembling their retainers, left Mandu for Agra to tender their allegiance in due form.

Realising that by these defections his chances of success were for the time being reduced to the lowest, Khan Jehan thought it wise to humble his pride, and he wrote a letter to the Emperor in which he expressed his profound remorse for his recent actions and implored his sovereign's forgiveness.

Shah Jehan's great wish was to number at his court all the most able and brilliant personalities of the empire, irrespective of the attitude they had taken up in regard to him in the past. Just in the same way as he had raised to the highest dignity Mahabat Khan, who had, but a few years previously, tried by all means in his power to bring about his downfall, so he now, in reply to Khan Jehan's petition, sent him a firman not only granting him a free pardon, but confirming him in his office of Viceroy of Khandesh. Khan Jehan, though he immediately evacuated Mandu and returned to Burhanpur, had submitted only to the force of circumstances, and at heart remained disloyal to the Emperor, whom he both feared and hated.

Almost simultaneously with these events a revolution broke out in Khadki, the capital of the Nizam Shahi kingdom, where the King, Murtaza II., weary of Fateh Khan's tutelage, had, with the assistance of an officer named Tukarrib Khan, deposed and imprisoned the Regent and assumed the reins of government himself. Khan Jehan, in spite of his reconciliation with Shah Jehan, made no attempt to repudiate the treaty he had concluded with the Nizam Shahi kingdom, nor to regain any part of the Balaghat for his sovereign ; and finally the Emperor, realising the danger of leaving the authority over the ever-seething Deccan in untrustworthy hands, recalled him to his court and sent Mahabat Khan to take his place at Burhanpur. Shah Jehan, though he received the ex-viceroy with great coldness, did not openly accuse him of disloyalty nor inflict any punishment upon him, but the strained relations between the sovereign and his servant were exploited by a noble, who,

[1] The title *Mirza-Raja* with its mingling of Musulman and Hindu forms was a creation of the great Akbar instituted as a further means of uniting Mohammedan and Hindu.

wishing to bring about a complete rupture between them, made the entirely false statement to Khan Jehan that the Emperor had issued orders for his arrest.

Seriously alarmed by this information, Khan Jehan took refuge in his mansion in the city of Agra, where he surrounded himself with his armed Afghan retainers and refused to return to court unless assured of a safe-conduct, written by the Emperor's own hand. Apart from his fear for his own safety, Khan Jehan did not really desire a peaceful solution to the situation which had arisen, for when Shah Jehan sent one of his leading nobles with a personal letter couched in friendly terms, conveying not only a guarantee that he would not be arrested, but also the Emperor's renewed assurance of his forgiveness for all the ex-viceroy's past misdemeanours, Khan Jehan was more than ever set upon rebellion and was actively occupied in gathering his Afghan supporters around him and preparing for flight.

News of these preparations was brought to Asaf Khan and he lost no time in warning the Emperor, whom he strongly urged to have Khan Jehan immediately arrested; to which the sovereign replied that, having with his own hand guaranteed his safety, he could not order his arrest for a crime of which, up to that moment, he had not yet proved himself guilty.

That same night Khan Jehan carried out his plan and, accompanied by his Afghans, fled from the capital, but his flight was intercepted in the vicinity of Dholpur just as he and his followers were preparing to cross the river Chambal, by a strong force of imperial troops.

Flight of Khan Jehan into Bundelkhand. Events in that country.

In the severe fighting which ensued many of the rebel leader's soldiers lost their lives, but Khan Jehan and his two sons, with a considerable number of their troops, were successful in fording the river and made their way into Bundelkhand.

Maharaja Bir Singh Deo of Orchha had died and had been succeeded on the throne of Bundelkhand by his son Jajhar Singh, who possessed his father's boldness of action without the guiding wisdom of the late Maharaja, and indulged in the dream of freeing himself entirely from the imperial suzerainty. Although Jajhar Singh himself was absent in the Deccan at the moment of Khan Jehan's arrival in Bundelkhand, his son Bikramajit had remained at Orchha, and, being fully alive to the advantages to be gained from a friendly understanding with the ex-viceroy, had him and

his followers safely conducted to the Deccan by way of the wild and lonely paths of the Maharaja's country.

Khan Jehan in the Deccan. Hostilities renewed.

Khan Jehan's first move on arriving in the Deccan was, by virtue of the terms of the former treaty of alliance, to appeal to Murtaza Nizam Shah for assistance, which was unhesitatingly promised him by that impetuous and imprudent young king, who thus brought the anger of the Moghul Emperor down upon his own head.

At the fortress of Daulatabad, whither Khan Jehan marched at the head of his army, he was joined by the Nizam Shahi troops commanded by the Mahratta chieftain Shahaji Bhonsle, who has been briefly mentioned in the preceding chapter.

Shah Jehan, meanwhile, whose personal experience of the Deccan and its many difficult problems was far in excess of that possessed by Khan Jehan or any other general who had served under him, proceeded to Burhanpur with the object of personally directing operations against the rebels and their Deccani allies. His plans were thought out with extraordinary skill and provision made for every possibility.

Azam Khan, a very distinguished soldier, was given the command of the main body of the imperial army, with instructions to invade the Nizam Shahi territory ; another force under the leadership of Abdullah Khan Firoz Jang, the Emperor's comrade on many campaigns, who had very soon after Shah Jehan's accession bidden farewell to the life of an ascetic in order to return to the field of his former activities, was sent into Malwa with the object, should Khan Jehan be defeated, of cutting off any attempt at retreat on his part to the Punjab by way of Central India. The Emperor's foresight in the direction of the campaign proved most successful. Azam Khan and his army, after crossing the Nizam Shahi border, encountered Khan Jehan's forces near Bir, east of Ahmednagar, and, after a fierce contest, decisively defeated them. Khan Jehan's nephew Bahadur fell in the battle, and the rebel leader himself, together with his three sons, Mahmud, Aziz and Hasan, and the remaining soldiers of his army, attempted, as Shah Jehan had expected, to retreat through Bundelkhand and Malwa to the North in the hope that if they could reach the Punjab, the seat of Khan Jehan's former viceroyalty and the original home of the Lodi clan, they would be able to raise a fresh army. This hope was doomed to the bitterest disappointment. There is a proverb known to the Rajputs which says " as false as a Bundela ", and the truth of this proverb received confirmation by the

Imperial victory near Bir.

attitude of Bikramajit of Orchha, who, when Khan Jehan's star had seemed to be in the ascendant, had treated him as an honoured guest, but who now, acting under the instructions of his father the Maharaja, made a treacherous and totally unexpected attack upon the Afghan leader and his forces.

Completely ignorant of the wild country into which they had penetrated, and hemmed in on all sides by mounted Bundelas, Khan Jehan and his followers still put up a brave, though on the face of it a perfectly hopeless fight, in which 400 Afghans fell, including Darya Khan, one of the rebel leader's finest and most trusted officers, whose head was severed from his body and sent as a peace-offering by Bikramajit to the Emperor.

Khan Jehan, his sons and the remnant of their army succeeded in cutting their way through the enemy ranks and fled towards Kalanjar, but, on reaching the gates of the celebrated fortress, they were held up by Abdullah Khan, who, with his entire force, had entered Bundelkhand by way of Malwa.

In the terrible battle which followed, Khan Jehan's troops were entirely routed, his son Mahmud slain and his other son Hasan taken prisoner.

Khan Jehan, overwhelmed with grief and himself wounded, exclaimed in passionate accents that he had no further desire to live and begged his few remaining followers to leave him to his fate and to save themselves ; but, with one or two exceptions, they refused to abandon their chief, and, closing round him, prepared to defend him to the last.

The final stand was made at the tank or artificial lake of Sindraha, a few miles north of Kalanjar, but their bravery availed them nothing against Abdullah Khan, now greatly reinforced by the garrison of Kalanjar under the command of the Governor, Syed Muzaffar Khan.

Defeat and death of Khan Jehan Lodi. Final Moghul triumph.

Khan Jehan, his son Aziz and 200 of their clansmen fell in the battle, and with their passing the last chance of the Indo-Afghan tribes to wrest the sovereignty of Hindustan from the Moghuls was for all time destroyed.

War with Ahmednagar and Bijapur. Siege of Daulatabad.

Following upon these events came a revolution in the Nizam Shahi kingdom : Shahaji Bhonsle, whose loyalty to Ahmednagar was merely the outcome of his personal devotion to Malik Ambar, made his formal submission to the imperial commander, Azam Khan, who, no longer hindered in his progress by the Mahratta chieftain's light horsemen, advanced rapidly towards the fortress of Daulatabad.

Murtaza Nizam Shah, seriously alarmed, appealed for assistance to Bijapur, in which country the death had occurred in the year 1626 of Ibrahim Adil Shah, a faithful ally of the Moghul Empire since the conclusion of his treaty with Jehangir. He had been succeeded by his son Mohammed, who, young and inexperienced, was completely under the influence of his court minstrel, originally a slave named Daulat, whom he had raised to nobility under the title of Khawas Khan. Acting upon the advice of this man, the new ruler of Bijapur decided to violate the treaty his father had entered into with the Moghuls and, in response to Murtaza Nizam Shah's request, despatched a strong force in the direction of Daulatabad. Azam Khan, with great skill, intercepted and attacked these troops before they could unite with the Nizam Shahi army and, gaining a complete victory over them, continued his advance on the fortress. The Moghuls were met beneath its walls by the entire Ahmednagar forces under the personal command of Murtaza Nizam Shah, and the battle which followed ended in the complete defeat and rout of the Deccanis, and in the retirement of their leader within the walls of the fortress.

Murtaza Nizam Shah dismissed his prime minister, Tukarrib Khan, and appointed in his place the former Regent, Fateh Khan, by which action he sealed his own doom.

Revolution in Ahmednagar

Fateh Khan, in whose mind the memory of his past imprisonment still rankled and who desired not only to avenge himself for this humiliation but also to ensure his continued power in the affairs of state, contrived to win over the garrison of Daulatabad ; and, putting Murtaza Nizam Shah to death, proclaimed the latter's infant son King under the title of Hussein Nizam Shah II.

The next step of Fateh Khan was to assume the regency for the child monarch and to conclude an agreement with the Moghul commander in which he undertook to hold the Nizam Shahi kingdom as a feudatory state of the empire.

Though these favourable terms were immediately accepted and ratified by Shah Jehan, they brought fresh complications in their train, for the reason that when a short time before Shahaji Bhonsle had made his submission to the Emperor, he had, in addition to being confirmed in the possession of his family *jagirs* of Poona and Supa, received certain lands forming part of the estate of Fateh Khan. Shahaji Bhonsle was now in turn deprived of this territory, which was restored to Fateh Khan on his becoming a vassal

of the empire : and, deeply angered by this treatment, the Mahratta chief unhesitatingly transferred his allegiance to Bijapur. Fateh Khan, intent on furnishing the Emperor with every proof of his loyalty, had undertaken to allow a detachment of Moghul soldiers to garrison Daulatabad, a prospect which very naturally aroused great consternation in the mind of Mohammed Adil Shah. Shahaji Bhonsle, who was not only a brave soldier but a clever politician, now suggested that an attempt should be made to entice Fateh Khan to abandon his newly acquired loyalty to the Moghul Emperor and offered, in order to bring this about, to proceed in person to Daulatabad.

Shahaji Bhonsle's proposals were laid before the King, Mohammed Adil Shah, and, what was far more important, before Khawas Khan, whose influence at the court was supreme ; and assent to them having been gained, the intrepid Mahratta placed himself at the head of a force composed of his own retainers and of Bijapur cavalry and rode to Daulatabad.

Shortly after starting, scouts brought him the news that a Moghul army, commanded by the Khan-i-Zaman, Mahabat Khan's eldest son, was likewise moving towards the fortress, and Shahaji, realising that his great chance lay in forestalling the imperial troops, made a dash for Daulatabad and succeeded in reaching the goal some hours in advance of the Moghuls.

He promptly obtained an audience with Fateh Khan, and in the name of the King of Bijapur offered him an offensive and defensive alliance against Shah Jehan, demanding in return that the district of Sholapur should be ceded to the Adil Shahi kingdom. Fateh Khan, whose surrender of Daulatabad to the Moghuls had been a half-hearted action, was glad of an opportunity to repudiate it by falling in with Shahaji's suggestions, and, when the Khan-i-Zaman arrived expecting to be presented with the keys of the fortress, he found himself greeted instead by a salvo of artillery.

Fateh Khan retired behind the walls of the Maha Kot or Great Fort, the citadel of Daulatabad, believing that he would find safety there, but even this formidable stronghold, which had held so many aggressors at bay, was powerless to stem the skilfully devised plans of Mahabat Khan, who now, at the head of the entire imperial army of the Deccan, advanced to the assistance of his son.

Shahaji and his cavalry were routed immediately, and

the Khan Khanan gave orders for the close investment of the fortress and commanded his sappers to lay a mine beneath the outer walls. It was to the Rajput contingents of the imperial army that Mahabat Khan entrusted the perilous task of taking Daulatabad by storm, not only because of their utter disregard of personal danger, but also because he felt that even with the passing years he had never lost his hold upon their affection and admiration of him as a leader.

At the appointed moment the mine was fired, causing a breach in the walls of the fortress through which Mahabat's storming columns now advanced, and in spite of the magnificent defence put up by the garrison, the outer fortifications were captured and strengthened. The Deccanis continued their fine resistance behind the massive walls of the Maha Kot for some days, until the firing of a second mine laid the citadel open to assault and Fateh Khan realised that further attempts to hold the fortress would necessarily prove futile. He sent his son, Abdul Rasul, to the Khan Khanan and begged for honourable terms on the plea that Shahaji and the Bijapuris were principally to blame for the part he had played. Mahabat Khan's reply demanded the unconditional surrender of the Regent as also of the boy King, Hussein Nizam Shah, and the cession of the fortress of Daulatabad to the Moghuls. A week later these terms had not only been accepted, but Fateh Khan and the youthful sovereign, guarded by a Moghul officer of high rank named Islam Khan, were on their way to Shah Jehan at Burhanpur. The child was by imperial command transferred to the fortress of Gwalior, where so many fallen monarchs had been sent to ponder over the glories of the past, but Fateh Khan was, in spite of his treachery, given a post in the Emperor's service, and a valuable *jagir* besides.

Fall of Daulatabad. Annexation to the empire of the Ahmednagar kingdom.

Mahabat Khan's troops immediately occupied Daulatabad and in all the mosques of the town of Khadki the Khutba was read in the name of Shah Jehan.

The Nizam Shahi kingdom of Ahmednagar now became finally extinct and, of the five Musulman kingdoms originally built up over the ruins of the Bahmani state, only two, Bijapur and Golconda, continued to exist.

The fortunes of war had been propitious for the Emperor, but almost simultaneously with the victory of his arms, Shah Jehan was called upon to face the greatest sorrow of his life. He had been accompanied from Agra to the Deccan by his devoted consort Arjumand Banu Begum, to whom, on his accession, he had given the high title of Mumtaz Mahal

(Glory of the Palace). Regardless of the fact that she was shortly to become a mother, she had insisted on being with her lord and taking part in the arduous march. On July 6, 1632, she gave birth to a daughter, subsequently named Roshanara, but though the child survived, the mother succumbed within a few hours to exhaustion. The Emperor's grief was at first terrible to behold, but as he gradually became calmer, his mind concentrated on the one thought how to raise a memorial to her which would give expression not only to his reverence, but above all to the purity of her soul and the beauty of her features. The stern tenets of the Islamic creed forbade him to cherish in any painted or graven likeness the face and form he had so dearly loved, and there came to Shah Jehan the singularly beautiful idea of raising over the earthly remains of Mumtaz Mahal a tomb, which Isa Mohammed, a skilled architect of the court, was instructed to erect.

Death of Mumtaz Mahal. Erection of the Taj.

This was composed of the purest white marble and inlaid with jewels which, by Shah Jehan's commands, were sent as a tribute to Agra from all those provinces of the empire which counted precious gems amongst their products.

The Empress was laid to rest in a beautiful garden on the bank of the Jumna opposite the fort palace, and over her grave there arose one of the great wonders of the world, the matchless Taj Mahal, the beautiful embodiment of the grief-stricken Emperor's dream. Amidst the chorus of admiration evoked by this masterpiece of art, there has been some criticism, which accuses it of being too light and feminine in conception, too much like a lady's jewel-box. Surely this is the highest praise bestowed upon the supreme genius of Isa Mohammed, for it proves that he had grasped the Emperor's inspiration and had thus immortalised his touching and beautiful romance.

Shah Jehan knew his own powers as an army leader; he had experienced the glory attaching to victory in the field, but he had also, when wandering from place to place through his father's vast empire, been a witness of the devastating effects of war upon a prosperous country. His sympathy with the innocent peasantry, who, their crops being ruined by the contending armies, found themselves face to face with starvation, never throughout his reign lost its hold upon the Emperor's heart, and it made him relentless in his attitude towards any voluntary disturber of the peace.

Aims of Shah Jehan.

It was this desire to deal with unjustifiable aggression which caused him in the year 1635 to despatch a punitive

Conquest of Bundelkhand.

expedition into Bundelkhand, where Jajhar Singh of Orchha, following in the footsteps of his father Bir Singh Deo, combined the rank of a feudal noble with the profession of brigand chief, and sought to enrich himself by extorting large ransoms in money from the wealthy merchants of the Deccan as they passed through Bundelkhand on their way to the North, or, in default, had their goods seized by his fierce clansmen. Encouraged by the success of his lawlessness and believing that the rough nature of his country would preserve him from attack, Jajhar Singh led his forces across the Narbada into Gondvana and made an absolutely unjustifiable raid upon the state of Chauragarh, whose ruler was a Gond Raja named Prem Narayan. The gallant resistance put up by the prince and his retainers proved of no avail; Prem Narayan fell in battle and the entire state treasure was seized by the Bundelas and carried to Orchha.

The Gond Raja, like the Chief of Orchha, was a vassal prince of the empire, and his heir, realising the hopelessness of his position against his powerful assailant, appealed to the Emperor, as their common suzerain, to enforce his authority.

Shah Jehan promptly sent a stern demand to Jajhar Singh for the immediate restoration of the booty taken at Chauragarh to the rightful owner, but the Bundela assumed an attitude of defiance and summoned his son Bikramajit, who was serving under the Khan Khanan in the Deccan, back to Orchha. Jajhar Singh, in showing such a bold front, had overlooked one very serious menace arising from the internal dissensions of his house, which dated from the time when the Emperor Jehangir had rewarded Bir Singh Deo for the murder of Abul Fazl by placing him upon the throne of the Bundela kingdom in defiance of the legitimate claims of his elder brother Ram Chand.

Ram Chand's death took place some years previous to these occurrences, but he had left a son, Devi Singh by name, who, having entered the imperial service, resided at the court and who, fully aware of the fact that his father had been passed over in the right of succession, was longing for the moment when an opportunity should offer for him to wrest the power from the usurper's heir. He sought an audience with the Emperor and offered to act as guide to the imperial troops in their campaign against Jajhar Singh and to lead them by secret paths, known only to the Bundelas and thus also to him, into Bundelkhand. In return for this offer he received the definite promise from

Shah Jehan that, should the punitive force be successful in overthrowing the present ruler, he should succeed him upon the throne of Orchha.

The Emperor conferred the chief command of the expedition upon his third son, Prince Aurangzeb, but in view of the Prince's extreme youth (he was only sixteen years of age) and of the fact that this was his first campaign, the three veteran officers, Khan Jehan, Khan Dauran and Abdullah Khan Firoz Jang, were appointed his military advisers and subordinate commanders.

This did not, however, imply that the young prince's office was purely an honorary one, for Shah Jehan clearly decreed that, in the event of any difference of opinion arising, the final decision should rest with Aurangzeb. At the end of September 1635, when the autumn rains had ceased, the Moghul army, including Devi Singh and all the personal retainers who had served under him at the court, set out on their march towards Bundelkhand. On October 2, the imperial forces, guided by the Bundela prince, had reached a point within two miles of the city of Orchha and discovered that Jajhar Singh and five thousand of his clansmen had taken up their position on the summit of a small hill named Kahmar-Wali, outside the walls of the capital.

Devi Singh, his hatred for his cousin growing in intensity as realised his close proximity, immediately voluntereed to lead an assault upon the hill and to attempt to take it by storm.

Aurangzeb consented and a bitter struggle ensued, in which men of the same race and clan fought with relentless fury against each other, but finally the attacking party, who were receiving support from the imperial troops, gained a complete victory ; and Jajhar Singh, his son Bikramajit and their followers fled for safety to the fortress of Dhamuni near Saugor.

October 4 saw the triumphal entry of the imperial troops into the capital of Bundelkhand, and Devi Singh was installed as Maharaja of Orchha in the great palace built by Bir Singh Deo.

After allowing themselves a rest of one day only, the Moghuls pressed on in pursuit of the fugitive Jajhar Singh, but on reaching Dhamuni they found that the deposed Bundela prince had evacuated it and retired to Chauragarh, where some of his clansmen had been left in occupation ever since the defeat and death of Prem Narayan.

Jajhar Singh's ultimate intention was to make his way to the Deccan and there to seek refuge with Mohammed Adil Shah, who still maintained a hostile attitude towards the Emperor.

Aurangzeb's forces, however, soon succeeded in overpowering the small garrison left at Dhamuni and occupying the fort, and, by the Prince's orders, Khan Dauran and the division under his command were sent in further pursuit of Jajhar Singh.

Realising the hopelessness of holding Chauragarh, the Bundelas blew up the ancient Gond palaces and the fortifications of the city and fled into the neighbouring Gond kingdom of Chanda. Jajhar Singh had overlooked the very natural resentment felt by the aboriginal princes of Gondvana towards the Bundelas, who, under the rule of Bir Singh Deo, supported by the high favour in which he had stood with the Emperor Jehangir, had prospered by plundering them. The Gond chieftains now felt that their hour of revenge had struck, and when Khan Dauran and his troops arrived at the frontier of the Chanda state the Raja and his Gonds immediately rallied to the Moghuls and assisted them by their knowledge of the country in speedily overtaking the fugitives.

Once more Jajhar Singh and Bikramajit succeeded in making their escape, but before doing so, in accordance with the terrible Rajput custom, they drew their swords in order to put their womenfolk to death and thus prevent them from falling into the enemy hands.

Bir Singh Deo's widow, the Maharani Parvati, succumbed instantaneously to wounds inflicted by her own kinsmen, but, owing to the violence and suddenness of the Moghul attack, the Rajputs were unable to carry out the ghastly sacrifice in a general way, with the result that almost all the ladies of the Bundela royal house were captured unharmed by Khan Dauran's troops, and with them a younger son of Jajhar, Durgabhan by name, and two of his grandsons named respectively Durjan Sal and Nar Singh Deo. The fallen Maharaja and his heir, with a handful of followers, fled into the wildest forest recesses of Gondvana where, completely exhausted and deeming themselves secure, they lay down to sleep.

The Moghuls had not continued their pursuit, but the Gonds' thirst for revenge was still not satisfied and they persisted on their track. Whilst father and son were lying in peaceful slumber, the neighing of one of their horses be-

trayed them to their enemies. A party of aborigines rushed upon them and slew them and their small band of followers before they had even time to draw their swords in self-defence.

The heads of Jajhar Singh and Bikramajit were sent to Shah Jehan, who at that moment was in camp at Sihur in Malwa, and thus it seemed as though, by a strange Nemesis, the crime perpetrated by Bir Singh Deo upon Abul Fazl had been punished by the same cruel fate.

Devi Singh was now head of the Bundela clan, but whereas some of the members of his family, notably those of the cadet branch of Datia, rose to considerable eminence, his descendants were never able to re-establish the great Central Indian power of the parent kingdom of Orchha, which gradually sank to the level of a minor state.

Shah Jehan's peaceful triumph in the Deccan.

The difficulties in Bundelkhand were scarcely overcome when, in 1636, Shah Jehan, having visited his recent conquests there, proceeded in person to Daulatabad, where he assembled an army of 50,000 men with the object of bringing the Bijapur war to a conclusion and completing the subjugation of the Deccan.

The position of the Moghuls in that part of India was by no means fully assured; the King of Bijapur remained hostile, the attitude of Golconda was unreliable, and Shahaji Bhonsle had gained possession of the fortress of Junnar, where he had installed an infant of the Nizam Shahi house as King of Ahmednagar with himself as Regent.

The arrival of the Emperor at Daulatabad was the signal for Abdullah Kutub Shah of Golconda to offer him his complete submission and promise henceforth to render to Shah Jehan all the honours due to him as his suzerain. On May 6 a treaty of peace and alliance was concluded between Mohammed Adil Shah and Shah Jehan, the most important clause of which was the appropriation of the entire territories of the extinct Nizam Shahi state in equal parts by Bijapur and the empire, thus completely ignoring the claims of Shahaji Bhonsle, who had looked upon Adil Shah as his ally and was now thrown entirely upon his own resources.

To put an end to any further attempt on Shahaji Bhonsle's part to maintain himself at Junnar, an imperial force, commanded by Shaista Khan, eldest son of Asaf Khan, was sent against him and, although the valiant Mahratta put up a fine defence, he was compelled to capitulate in the month of July, to surrender Junnar, and also to hand over the child whom he had proclaimed king to Shah Jehan's representatives.

The Emperor dealt generously with Shahaji Bhonsle, whom he readmitted to the service of Bijapur, restoring to him all his family *jagirs*. Shah Jehan left Prince Aurangzeb as Viceroy in the Deccan and himself returned to Agra, but the memories of Mumtaz Mahal were of so poignant a nature as he once more set foot in the city which had been the scene of their marriage and in which now the beautiful tomb over her mortal remains was nearing completion, that he felt incapable, deprived of her presence, of taking up life there again, and deserted Agra for the old imperial capital of Delhi.

Moghul Empire at its zenith. Founding of the modern Delhi.

In the ancient city, where so many lines of sovereigns had built magnificent palaces the greater number of which had been abandoned and allowed to crumble into decay, Shah Jehan founded the city of Shahjehanabad, the Delhi of to-day.

The Moghul Empire undoubtedly attained its zenith during this monarch's reign.

One of the greatest reasons of Shah Jehan's success as an Indian ruler was that he realised, as so many had done before his time and as many have done since, that the great wealth and strength of the country lay in its agricultural possibilities. He constituted himself the zealous protector of the peasants, and it is said that, when visiting Lahore in 1633, he gave orders for the royal guards to line both sides of the roads leading to the city gates so as to prevent any of his vast retinue of elephants and horses from trampling the crops in the adjacent fields.

In regard to his policy in religious matters, the Emperor granted full protection to the Hindu faith, but his liberalism was exercised on a somewhat narrower scale than that of Akbar, inasmuch as he occasionally refused permission for the erection of more Hindu temples. The great Rajput vassals, such as Maharana Jagat Singh of Mewar, Mirza-Raja Jai Singh of Amber, and Maharaja Jaswant Singh of Marwar continued to enjoy Shah Jehan's entire confidence and remained united to the throne by the closest ties of loyalty and affection.

The intellectual and artistic renaissance, which had commenced in his grandfather's reign, made rapid strides under Shah Jehan, and architecture especially attained to great perfection, the Emperor himself finding his greatest comfort and distraction in the planning of beautiful buildings.

The palaces and the splendid Pearl Mosque in the fort at Agra owe their conception to his architectural talents, but

his greatest efforts were concentrated upon beautifying in every way possible his new capital of Delhi. The mighty fortress of red sandstone which he caused to be erected on the bank of the river Jumna far exceeded in majestic splendour the stronghold at Agra.

The palace stood immediately within, and the glint of the white marble arches and pavilions of the imperial residence, inlaid with mosaic of birds and flowers executed in gold and precious stones, the work of a Franco-Greek artist named Austin of Bordeaux, produced an effect of quite unrivalled beauty.

The silver ceiling with which Shah Jehan adorned the Diwan-i-Khas or Hall of Private Audience, was destroyed during the disorders of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, but the beautiful hall still remains and justifies the famous inscription engraved upon its walls: "If there is a Paradise on Earth it is this, it is this, it is this".

Outside the gates of the fort palace, but built in the same design, arose the splendid Jama Masjid, its domes and minarets outlined against the sky. This wonderful building has ever since been looked upon by the Indian Mohammedans as the Cathedral Mosque of Hindustan.

The magnificence of the durbars held by all previous Moghul Emperors paled almost by comparison with those which took place during Shah Jehan's reign in the Diwan-i-Am of the palace of Delhi. The Emperor's throne, composed entirely of gold studded with precious stones and surmounted by a golden dome, was placed at the upper end of the hall, and seated upon it was Shah Jehan clad in garments of richest silk and wearing a turban of cloth of gold adorned by a jewelled *sarpech* (aigrette) upon his head. Immediately behind the royal seat stood the emblems of the world-famed Peacock Throne of the great Moghul—two peacocks, their expanded tails composed of rubies, sapphires, emeralds and pearls; and between them a green parrot, carved out of a single gigantic emerald and perched at a symmetrical height, completed this transcendent picture of Oriental splendour.

Changes in Persia. Peaceful acquisition of Kandahar.

Events in Persia, which had had their beginning after the occupation in the year 1623 of Kandahar by Shah Abbas the Great, gradually led up to a further aggrandisement of Shah Jehan's power. The Persian sovereign had conferred the government of the city upon Ali Mardan Khan, one of the highest and most distinguished nobles of his court. Abbas died in 1628 and was succeeded on the throne of

Iran by his grandson Shah Sufi, who from the first moment of coming to power proved himself a merciless tyrant who would bestow high honours on members of his court one day, only to condemn them to torture and death on the very next. In the year 1638 this monarch became suspicious of Ali Mardan Khan, and but for the fact that the governor was so well served by his agents at Ispahan, he would probably have been another victim of his master's cruelty. As matters were, Ali Mardan Khan forestalled him and, yielding Kandahar to the Moghuls, entered the service of Shah Jehan.

The imperial standard was once more raised over the citadel of Kandahar and Ali Mardan Khan proceeded to Lahore, where he tendered his homage to the Emperor, who loaded him with gifts, and created him Amir-ul-Umara or chief of the nobles and Governor of Kashmir. In the following year he was in addition appointed Viceroy of the Punjab, which made him one of the leading personalities of the Moghul Empire and eventually resulted in the development of a close personal friendship between him and Shah Jehan.

India's relations with the West.

The relations between India and the West became of a much more intimate nature during the reign of Shah Jehan than they had hitherto been. With the exception of the occupation of the port of Pulicat by the Dutch in 1609 and the permission granted two years later to the English Company to erect factories at Surat, Ahmedabad, Cambay and Gogo, the Portuguese had been the dominant European influence in Indian waters, but by the union with Spain, which brought Portugal's Indian subjects under the ban of the Holy Inquisition, feelings of violent antagonism had been aroused amongst the local authorities of the surrounding Moghul provinces.

When Shah Jehan came to the throne he determined to avenge the cruelty perpetrated in the name of religion upon the Indian population of the districts held by Portugal, and almost immediately after his accession despatched an army under the command of Kasim Khan, Viceroy of Bengal, to capture the Portuguese factory of Hugli.

It is possible that these violent measures were also to some extent the outcome of a deep resentment still rankling in Shah Jehan's heart towards the chiefs of this particular factory for having, in loyalty to the Emperor Jehangir, from whom they held their concessions, refused to supply his son with the artillery he had asked for when marching through

Bengal to the North in open rebellion against the sovereign. The Portuguese held their factory bravely for nearly three months, but eventually were compelled to surrender and to suffer the humiliation of seeing the church and the dwelling-houses they had erected razed to the ground by the Moghuls, and of being themselves carried in great numbers, men and women alike, into captivity at Agra. Some of the younger women were forced to accept Islam and spent the remainder of their lives as slaves in the harems of the Emperor and his nobles. In the case of the men, Shah Jehan relented and eventually restored them to liberty without exacting from them any change of faith. Many of them continued to live in Agra as peaceful citizens, following their various avocations without interference of any kind.

Almost simultaneously with the weakening of Portuguese power in India, the influence of the English East India Company, though at the time of a purely commercial character, began to increase.

The conversion of the Hindus and Musulmans to Christianity formed no part of the aims of the English in their relations with India, and thus they remained on friendly terms with those Indian rulers and their people with whom they were brought into contact.

Founding of Madras.

In 1639, Francis Day, an agent of the East India Company, received from the Raja of Chandragiri, a descendant of the former kings of Vijayanagar, the grant of a small village named Chennapatanam on the coast of Coromandel. Day, in order to provide for the safety of the newly acquired settlement, erected a small fort upon it, to which he gave the name of Fort St. George, and eventually a great city, that of Madras, grew up beneath it.

Up to that time, however, the harmonious relations between the Moghul sovereign and the English were entirely upon a commercial basis ; the human and the more enduring element was brought into them by an event in which Shah Jehan's personal affections were deeply involved and in which an Englishman was able to ward off a sorrow from the Emperor second only to that caused by the death of his beloved consort.

Princess Jehanara.

Princess Jehanara, Shah Jehan's eldest daughter, had not only inherited the great personal beauty of her mother, Mumtaz Mahal, but in her character also there existed the same mingling of sweetness and of strength. She realised, as she grew to womanhood, that beneath all the splendour of the vast empire over which he had been called to rule, her

father was in truth a very lonely, grief-stricken man. She set herself to study and to understand his every thought and to sympathise with his varying moods, with the result that the tenderest affection grew up between Shah Jehan and this daughter.

In the evenings when the royal kettledrums from the Naubat Khana heralded the sunset, the signal for the nobles assembled in the Diwan-i-Am to disperse to their several mansions, the Emperor would seek rest from the magnificence of the Hall of Audience in the private apartments of his palace, and here Jehanara would join him for intimate talks in which Shah Jehan allowed his daughter the fullest insight into all the far-reaching questions connected with his great calling, and opened his heart to her on matters of the most personal nature.

Jehanara used the immense influence she possessed with her father entirely for good, her greatest ambition being to lighten his burdens of state and to bring back happiness to his life. She strove to restore harmony wherever there was conflict, and on many occasions serious quarrels between the great nobles of the court owed their peaceful solution to the hidden influence of Jehanara, exercised through their wives ; already at that period she was untiring in her efforts to bring about a better understanding between her brothers, Dara Shekoh and Aurangzeb, whose increasing hostility was gradually becoming a menace to the Moghul Empire.

On the evening of March 26, 1644, as the Princess left her father to return to her own quarters in the harem, attended by her favourite slave girl, a lamp suspended from the ceiling of one of the palace corridors fell, and in so doing set the garments of the slave girl alight.

She screamed with terror, and Jehanara, entirely disregarding all personal danger, flung her arms round her servant and endeavoured to extinguish the flames with her hands. In an instant her own robe of finest muslin, rendered additionally inflammable by the attar of roses with which it was scented, had become ignited with flames, and before assistance could be summoned the princess had sustained terrible burns all over her body. The slave girl succumbed to her injuries almost immediately, and the Princess lay for weeks delirious and suffering great agony.

Shah Jehan, overwhelmed with anxiety and grief, summoned doctors from every part of the empire to the capital, but all their efforts to save Jehanara seemed unavailing, and, exhausted by suffering, she grew steadily weaker.

In his agony of mind Shah Jehan fervently invoked the help of Allah to spare his beloved child and, according to a contemporary chronicler, he placed a purse filled with gold beneath her pillow every evening to be given in the morning to any needy inhabitant of Delhi, in the vain hope that the Highest Power might, by this good deed, be moved to mercy.

It was at the very moment when the Emperor had abandoned all hope that he received information of the arrival at Delhi, on a chance visit, of Gabriel Boughton, surgeon to the East India Company's ship *Hopewell*. Shah Jehan, turning a deaf ear to all the remonstrances of the more rigid Musulmans of the court, immediately sent an urgent summons to the English doctor to attend at the palace, and Gabriel Boughton, on his arrival, was at once, by the Emperor's orders, conducted to the harem. His medical knowledge and skill succeeded where all the treatment resorted to by the other physicians had failed, and Jehanara gradually gained strength, and in a few months was completely restored to health.

The gratitude of Shah Jehan towards the doctor knew no limits and he asked him to name his own reward for saving the life of his beloved child.

Gabriel Boughton's reply was a modest refusal to accept any personal reward for what he considered had merely been his duty, but he added that, if the Emperor desired to commemorate the recovery of his daughter in a manner which would also bring happiness to himself, he begged him to grant some favour to the English settlers in Bengal who, at that time, were still labouring under very considerable disadvantages. Shah Jehan joyfully acceded to this request, and when he finally allowed Boughton to leave the capital, the latter took with him an imperial firman conferring on the East India Company the monopoly of the foreign trade with Bengal and granting to its representatives complete freedom of movement and every commercial facility throughout the Moghul Empire. Arrived at Raj Mahal, the capital of Bengal, the English doctor was received with the highest honours by Prince Shuja, second son of the Emperor and Viceroy of the province, whom Boughton succeeded in curing of a troublesome ailment from which he had long been suffering.

To prove his appreciation of Boughton's skill, the Prince gave the East India Company permission to establish a factory at Balasore in addition to the one already built up

on the foundations of the former Portuguese settlement at Hugli.

Thus it can be said that the earliest origin of British influence in Bengal may be traced to some extent to the stroke of fate which brought the unknown doctor of an English ship to India and caused him, by his skill, to restore to health the being nearest to the heart of the great Moghul.

Shah Jehan's policy in Central Asia. Events in that region.

As far as his relations with the Musulman kingdoms of the Deccan were concerned, Shah Jehan's policy was entirely pacific, and he was content with the continued acknowledgement of his suzerainty by Golconda and by the maintenance of the alliance concluded with Bijapur, but, like so many of his predecessors, he was intensely drawn towards the realms of Central Asia and he considered that the Uzbek states of Balkh and Badakshan were his by right of tradition, always so powerful a factor in the East, for the reason that they had formed part of the empire of his ancestor Timur the Lame. For many centuries these two countries had been ruled over by the Shaibanids, descendants of Babur's irreconcilable opponent Shaibani, but in the year 1559 a dynasty hailing from Astrakhan acquired the sovereignty.

At the moment when Shah Jehan first began to dream of incorporating these kingdoms into the imperial system, they had, as the result of a civil war between the reigning monarch of Bokhara, Nazar Mohammed, and his eldest son, Abdul Aziz, become divided, and Abdul Aziz was now ruling over Bokhara, whilst his father retained Balkh as his kingdom.

Moghul invasion of Balkh under Prince Murad Bakhsh.

Balkh, by its strategical position and also because of the severe losses incurred in the civil war, was by far the less formidable kingdom to attack, and Shah Jehan, quick to realise this, in June 1646 sent an army 50,000 strong under the command of his youngest son, Prince Murad Bakhsh, to invade Nazar Mohammed's dominions.

The campaign itself was entirely successful for the simple reason that, as the Moghuls approached his capital, Nazar Mohammed took to flight, and, on July 2, Murad Bakhsh entered Balkh at the head of his army without encountering the least resistance.

Victory gained without any military triumph did not, however, appeal to the ambitious and warlike instincts of Murad Bakhsh. The young Prince, when entrusted by Shah Jehan with the command of the expedition, had started in the belief that he would return covered with glory, and he was bitterly disappointed that the Uzbeks had not put up a fight and had thus deprived him of his laurels. In addition,

the prospect now before him of having to take up his residence for an indefinite period in this distant city of Central Asia and of foregoing the life of luxury and pleasure he was accustomed to lead in Delhi, was utterly distasteful to him.

Very soon after his entry into Balkh he wrote to his father begging him to recall him to India, and when the Emperor refused his request, he announced to all the officers and troops under his command his intention to return to Hindustan in defiance of Shah Jehan's order. As was to be expected, the mutinous attitude taken up by their commander soon spread to his officers, who also began to agitate in favour of a prompt return to India, and resulted in complete demoralisation in regard to the rank and file, who, losing all sense of discipline, organised plundering expeditions into different parts of the country surrounding the capital. Shah Jehan was quick to see the grave danger threatening from his son's insubordination and turned for advice to his Wazir, Sadullah Khan, who had succeeded to that high office upon the death in 1641 of Asaf Khan.

The Emperor had been wise in his choice of this man to the most powerful office in the state, for he combined great military gifts with an intelligence of the highest order, and had rapidly gained influence with all classes of the population, who respected him for his firmness and justice and, above all, for his unquestionable personal integrity.

Sadullah Khan replied to his sovereign by offering to proceed to Balkh at once and to do his utmost to dissuade the Prince from rebellion. He accomplished the journey as swiftly as possible and arrived at Balkh on August 10, but, far from succeeding in his mission of bringing about a peaceful solution, he found the Prince fully determined to desert his post, and with quick intuition realised that this would be the wiser course, since any attempt to restore discipline amongst the Moghul ranks was doomed to failure so long as Murad's influence continued. The Prince returned to Delhi under a cloud of disgrace, and the command of the troops, as also the administration of the city and province of Balkh, was placed under the joint authority of two distinguished Moghul officers named respectively Bahadur Khan and Asalat Khan. The government of the neighbouring province of Badakshan, and the command of the troops left there, was conferred upon the Turkoman Chin Kulich Khan, an ancestor of the founder of the dynasty of the Nizams of Hyderabad.

Sadullah Khan, having completed his task in Balkh, rode

from that city to Kabul in the record time of four days to meet the Emperor, who had meanwhile proceeded there.

A conference between Shah Jehan and the Wazir resulted in a summons to Prince Aurangzeb to proceed to Lahore, where the sovereign would meet him and give him full instructions in regard to taking up the command at Balkh which his brother had vacated.

Recall of Murad from Balkh. Prince Aurangzeb succeeds him in command.

Immediately on receipt of his father's firman, Aurangzeb, at that time Viceroy of Gujarat, placed the administration of that province in the hands of his maternal uncle, Shaista Khan.

After being received by his father in audience, the Prince, at the head of considerable reinforcements, proceeded to Peshawar, but further progress had to be abandoned until the spring of the following year, 1647, as the autumn rains, followed by the severe winters in Central Asia, made it quite impossible to conduct military operations during those seasons.

On May 25 Aurangzeb and his troops at length reached Balkh after a trying march, frequently interrupted by attacks of large bodies of Uzbeks, who endeavoured to impede his advance.

The conditions which the Prince found upon arriving at his destination were such as to convince not only him, but also two of the most distinguished *Mansabdars* of the empire, the Amir-ul-Umara, Ali Mardan Khan, and Mirza-Raja Jai Singh of Amber, who had accompanied him from India, the latter in command of a strong Rajput contingent, that the evil effects of the example set by Murad Bakhsh were beyond repair.

Whereas the Uzbeks looked upon the struggle almost in the light of a holy war and fought as men have done throughout the ages in defence of their homes and their freedom, the greater part of the Moghul army, and notably their officers, had come to regard Central Asia, the land of their ancestors, as foreign soil. The war upon which Shah Jehan had so impulsively embarked was unpopular with them to the highest degree, and they longed more and more to return to the fertile plains and hot sun of Hindustan.

To free their countries from the invaders, Abdul Aziz of Bokhara and Nazar Mohammed of Balkh, decided to bury past feuds, and the former, assembling his forces, marched to his father's assistance, the Moghuls thus finding themselves faced by a national uprising. It is not necessary to follow the somewhat wearisome details of the ensuing campaign, with

its alternating advances and retirements ; suffice it to say that in June of the same year the Emperor had come to realise that permanent occupation of a country such as Balkh, even could victory be achieved, would prove a source of weakness rather than of strength to his empire, and instructed his son to conclude peace.

Negotiations were commenced at once and a treaty was at length signed, by which Balkh and Badakshan were restored to Nazar Mohammed. On October 3 Aurangzeb led his army out of the gates of the city of Balkh and commenced his march back to Kabul.

Evacuation of Balkh. Disastrous retreat.

This retirement, however, was attended with great peril to the imperial troops, for although the Uzbeks were now at peace with Shah Jehan, their ruler, Nazar Mohammed, had no power whatever over the fierce Mongol Hazaras inhabiting the fastnesses of the Hindu Kush, through which the Moghuls were bound to pass in the course of their retreat. To add to the difficulties, winter began exceptionally early that year, and as the troops, suffering severely from the cold, toiled through the snow-bound passes, they were incessantly subjected to the harassing attacks of the Hazara marauders.

On November 10 the imperial army commenced to enter Kabul, and it was eventually found that the entire forces under Aurangzeb had suffered a total loss of 10,000 men.

Changes in Persia.

The only war of aggression undertaken by Shah Jehan beyond the borders of India had thus ended disastrously, but his popularity was too great to allow this to weaken his prestige in the eyes of his subjects there ; in distant Persia, however, the news of his failure in Balkh was followed by far-reaching consequences. Shah Sufi had died in 1641 and had been succeeded by his son Abbas II., a boy of sixteen. The later career of this prince was in no way remarkable, but in his early youth, before he became a prey to intemperance and other vices, he was possessed of a strong will and of high courage, which he concentrated upon one sole aim, that of regaining the city of Kandahar from the Moghuls. Encouraged by the defeat of the imperial troops at Balkh, Shah Abbas began to assemble a powerful army at Herat, with the intention of starting upon the venture so near to his heart. The Emperor, on receiving information of the Shah's preparations, immediately left Delhi for Kabul, but not before he had issued orders to the different provincial Viceroys to despatch all the troops that could be spared to Afghanistan. The great *Mansabdars* of the empire, how-

ever, were reluctant, so soon after the disaster at Balkh, to risk their own lives and those of their retainers in a fresh campaign beyond the North-west Frontier, and delayed their departure for Kabul.

In the meantime the Emperor's advisers made light of the danger threatening, and assured him that, as winter was now fast approaching, any advance by the Persians for the present was quite impossible. Their calculations were made without knowledge of the intensity of the Persian monarch's desire to reconquer Kandahar. Undismayed by the rigours and dangers of a campaign during the cold season, he led his army in safety from Herat into Moghul Afghanistan, and, by December 1648, succeeded in reaching the outer walls of the coveted city. Shah Jehan had, during the ten years which had elapsed since the surrender of Kandahar by Ali Mardan Khan, caused the fortifications to be considerably strengthened, and had the Moghul governor been equal to his task, it is possible that the city might have resisted the onslaught. Daulat Khan, the governor, a Rangar [1] of the Punjab, originally appointed by Jehangir captain of the Imperial Guard, principally owing to his handsome appearance, had been a brave soldier in his time, but he was now advanced in years, and the sudden and unexpected arrival of the large Persian army with its formidable artillery threw him into a state of complete panic. The Persians seized an eminence overlooking both the citadel and the town without encountering any resistance, and from that point of vantage they pitilessly bombarded the luckless defenders of Kandahar. For three months the Moghul garrison held out, but the contradictory orders issued by their commander threw them into a state of bewilderment, and this, added to the presence of the traitors in their midst, brought about the inevitable issue.

These traitors were a body of Uzbek mercenaries who, at the conclusion of the Balkh campaign, had entered the Moghul service, but who, recognising no obligations towards Shah Jehan beyond those of self-interest, now opened secret negotiations with the enemy. By their machinations a Persian officer was admitted into the fortress, and Daulat Khan, with criminal weakness, gave him permission to address the troops.

The morale of the garrison went from bad to worse, until on February 11, 1649, the Moghul commander, realising that

[1] " Rangar " was a name given to a Rajput convert to Islam and his descendants.

his authority was completely undermined, surrendered Kandahar to the Shah. Loss of Kandahar.

The Uzbek leaders openly entered Persian service, but Shah Abbas generously permitted the remainder of the defeated forces to march back to Kabul.

Within the following four years Shah Jehan despatched three formidable armies to retake Kandahar, one in 1649, a second in 1652 under the command of Prince Aurangzeb, and the third in 1653, led by the heir apparent, Prince Dara Shekoh. Desperate fighting took place in each case, but all three expeditions were doomed to failure, and Kandahar, an important part of the heritage of Babur, was lost to his descendants for all time.

The Emperor had reappointed Prince Aurangzeb to the Viceroyalty of the Deccan in the year 1652, a post previously held by him from 1636 to 1644, and on October 28, 1653, the Prince formally assumed office at Aurangabad, so named by him during his first Viceroyalty. Prince Aurangzeb Viceroy of the Deccan.

Aurangabad, the Khadki of Malik Ambar's days, now became the seat of the Moghul government in the Deccan, and, by reason of its splendid palace, great mosque and the many fine mansions erected by Prince Aurangzeb's orders, soon grew into one of the finest cities of the empire. The Viceroy, with the assistance of his able Diwan, the Persian Murshid Kuli, devoted himself mainly to the task of civil administration, and above all to the remodelling of the land assessment system of the Deccan, on which the revenue naturally so much depended.

There were, however, very different plans working in the Prince's mind, and, while he appeared to be whole-heartedly engaged on improving conditions in the Deccan, he was steadily devising a scheme for the overthrow of Bijapur and Golconda, the two remaining Musulman states in that country.

The desire to see the subversion of these provinces was due not so much to the Prince's personal ambition, as to religious fanaticism, his dominant trait.

Himself a bigoted Sunni, he hated the thought that there should be two rulers in the Deccan belonging to the Shiah branch of Islam, but at the same time it was essential that for the moment Aurangzeb should not arouse the suspicions of Shah Jehan, who was not only broad-minded in religious matters, but also had no reason or desire to break the peace which had endured for over twenty years between the empire and the Deccan states.

Rise of Mir Jumla.

It is here necessary to go back briefly some twenty years in order to introduce a personality whose later career became closely interwoven with that of Aurangzeb, and who eventually played a prominent part in assisting the Prince to carry out his plans.

This man was Mir Mohammed Said Ardistani, better known by his title of Mir Jumla, and was the son of an oil merchant of Ispahan.

Knowing the favour always shown to natives of the great Shiah empire by the kings of the Deccan, he had come to India with the hope of being admitted into the service of one of the rulers in that country. At that period the diamond mines of Golconda were yielding untold wealth, and Hyderabad, the capital of the kingdom, was then the centre of the diamond trade of the entire East.

In its bazaars dealers belonging to every nation of the Orient met and bargained and dealt in precious stones, and it was in Hyderabad that, about the year 1630, Mir Jumla started life as a diamond merchant. The Golconda mines were the property of the state, so that the diamond merchants were frequently brought into close relations with the court, and Mir Jumla, being especially fortunate, was by the reigning monarch, Mohammed Kutub Shah II., granted the right to farm the revenues of the diamond industry on behalf of his sovereign. The Shah soon realised that the Persian was a man of exceptional talents and advanced him to high favour, which was perpetuated during the reign of his successor, Abdullah Kutub Shah, so much so that, within a few years, the son of the oil merchant of Ispahan occupied the proud position of Wazir of Golconda.

It was not long before opportunity offered for Mir Jumla to give proof of his very high military genius.

The Hindu South.

The treaty concluded with the empire both by Golconda and Bijapur prevented any possible expansion northwards for the former kingdom, but to the Far South, whither the Moghul armies had not succeeded in penetrating, the way still lay open. Of those independent Southern states which had at one time paid tribute to the great Hindu empire of Vijayanagar, only two, Mysore and Madura, still remained powerful; the others, such as Trichinopoli, Tanjore and, weakest of all, Chandragiri, were an easy prey to the invader. In this last state there ruled, in much reduced sovereignty, Shri Ranga III., a descendant of the mighty Rayas.

After the overthrow of the empire of Vijayanagar on the field of Talikota by the powerful Deccan kings, the con-

querors succeeded in occupying the provinces immediately surrounding the fallen capital, but to the south the Moslem advance had been stayed, and in the district of Cuddapah and the Carnatic the Dravidian population had not suffered ; their rich fields continued to flourish, and but for an occasional raid, the immensely wealthy ancient Hindu shrines had remained unmolested.

The reason to which Chandragiri owed its safety was probably to be found in the fact that, after the fall of Vijayanagar, the Nayaks of Madura, though they had actually become independent rulers, at first continued their allegiance voluntarily, if in a rather desultory fashion, to the Chandragiri princes, whom they still looked upon as the rightful heirs of the great Empire of the South.

This allegiance came to a definite end with the accession, to the throne of Madura, of the famous Tirumala Nayak (1627-1659), who repudiated all obligations entered into by his predecessors and thus completely severed all connection between the Northern and Southern Carnatic. It was at this moment that Mir Jumla, Wazir of Golconda, prevailed upon his sovereign, Abdullah Kutub Shah, to allow him to lead an army against Chandragiri, and this small kingdom, abandoned to its fate by its Hindu neighbours, soon fell a prey to the Moslem forces.

They overran the district of Cuddapah, continuing their advance towards the famous rock fortress of Gandikota, which they took by storm, and in due course occupied the capital, Chandragiri. The ancient and wealthy Temple of Vishnu at Tirupati, still one of the most sacred shrines of Southern India, was desecrated and robbed of its treasures, a fate which was meted out to many other centres of Hindu worship in the Northern Carnatic.

Following up his military success, Mir Jumla conquered the whole of the rich province from Guntur to the Chilka Lake on the borders of Orissa, later known as the Northern Circars.

Abdullah Kutub Shah, as a mark of gratitude towards his Wazir, bestowed upon him, as his personal *jagir*, three hundred miles of the subjugated country, which included within its limits the famous diamond mines of Kolar, and these now became his private property and the main source of his great wealth.

Mir Jumla carried on a most profitable trade in diamonds with the Portuguese at Goa, and counted as his principal client the Viceroy, Dom Felipe da Mascarenhas. With the

proceeds he raised and equipped an army 25,000 strong, and a formidable park of artillery cast from the copper idols of the plundered Hindu shrines and manned by efficient English and French gunners ; he also included in his retinue 150 well-trained war elephants.

Whilst living on his huge estates almost in regal splendour, Mir Jumla still retained his hold on the government of Golconda ; his son, Mohammed Amin, acted as his deputy at Hyderabad, and every office of importance in the state was filled by the Wazir's nominees. By degrees Abdullah Kutub Shah came to the conclusion that to vest so much power in a subject had been, to say the least, an unwise step, and, growing suspicious, he commanded the Wazir to attend at the capital.

Mir Jumla obeyed his sovereign's summons, but though Abdullah Kutub Shah received him with wonted cordiality, the Wazir had not been at the court more than a very few days before he discovered that there was a plot in the making to seize, imprison, and, worst of all, to blind him.

Mir Jumla lost no time, but left Hyderabad and fled back to his *jagir*, but Abdullah Kutub Shah made no further attempt to hide his designs upon the minister, whose son and family were arrested by his orders and imprisoned within the fortress of Golconda.

The existence of Mir Jumla had long been known to Prince Aurangzeb, whose spies were distributed everywhere, and who had recognised in the Wazir the most useful ally in his scheme for the subversion of the Kutub Shahi kingdom. For some time, though still personally unacquainted, the two men had been indulging in secret correspondence, and at this critical moment the Wazir wrote the Moghul prince the following letter :

I have rendered, as all the world knows, essential services to the King of Golconda, and he owes me a heavy debt of gratitude. Nevertheless he is plotting my ruin and that of my family. May I be permitted, therefore, to throw myself under your protection ?

In acknowledgment of the kindness I anticipate at your hands, I suggest a plan by which you may easily obtain possession both of the King's person and kingdom.

Confide in my integrity, and the enterprise will be neither difficult nor dangerous. Assemble four or five thousand of your choicest cavalry, and proceed by forced marches towards Golconda, which may be reached in sixteen days, spreading a rumour that this body of horse is escorting an Ambassador

from Shah Jehan, who has affairs of moment to negotiate with the King at Bhagnagar.[1]

The Dabir,[2] through whose medium the first communication is always made to the King, is my relation, my creature and entirely in my confidence.

You have only to advance with rapidity and I promise so to order it that you shall arrive at the gate of Bhagnagar without exciting a suspicion that you are any other than an Ambassador from Shah Jehan. When the King advances, according to custom, to receive his credentials, you may easily secure his person, then his whole family, and dispose of him in the manner you may deem fit, inasmuch as his palace of Bhagnagar, where he usually lives, is unwalled and without a ditch or fortification of any sort. Meanwhile I will defray the whole expense of the expedition and engage to pay fifty thousand rupees daily during the time it may be in progress.[3]

Shah Jehan had been duly informed of the break between the King of Golconda and his Wazir, and, though anxious to win the allegiance of so able a servant as Mir Jumla, he still most earnestly desired to maintain peace with Abdullah Kutub Shah. He therefore sent simultaneously a firman to Mir Jumla, through the agency of Aurangzeb, creating him a commander of 6000 in the imperial service ; and a letter to the King of Golconda, couched in most friendly terms, requesting him to release the family of his former Wazir, who was about to become a *Mansabdar* of the empire.

Aurangzeb despatched both the firman to Mir Jumla and the Emperor's letter to the King of Golconda, but whilst nominally obeying his father's commands, he had determined to go against them in spirit and to make a treacherous attack on Abdullah Kutub Shah before the King had been given time either to accede to or refuse Shah Jehan's request.

To obtain his end the Prince followed, in a somewhat modified form, the plan suggested to him by Mir Jumla.

Aurangzeb attacks Golconda.

Some years previous to these events Aurangzeb had betrothed his eldest son, Mohammed Sultan, to his cousin, Gulrukh Banu, daughter of the Emperor's eldest son, Prince Shuja.

At the time of their betrothal the bride and bridegroom were mere children, but now they had attained marriageable age and Aurangzeb made the public announcement to the

[1] The name originally given to Hyderabad by its founder, Kuli Kutub Shah, after Bhagmati, his favourite dancing girl, until subsequent to her death it was changed to Hyderabad.

[2] The Dabir-ul-Mulk or Minister of Foreign Affairs.

[3] *Travels in the Moghul Empire*, Bernier, pp. 19-20.

viceregal court that his son, Mohammed Sultan, would shortly leave Aurangabad for Bengal, of which province Prince Shuja was Viceroy, and that the nuptials with the princess would be forthwith solemnised there. Having made this announcement, he wrote to Abdullah Kutub Shah begging him, in token of his friendship, to permit his son to travel to Bengal via Golconda and Orissa so as to avoid the long journey through Central India. Totally unsuspicious of the sinister designs which had provoked this letter and glad of the opportunity of impressing his formidable neighbour with the cordiality of his feelings, Abdullah Kutub Shah at once consented to the Prince's request, and on January 10, 1656, Mohammed Sultan, with an escort of 5000 especially selected Moghul cavalry, set out from Aurangabad. He carried on his person his father's instructions to the effect that, arrived at Hyderabad, he should immediately carry out an attack upon Abdullah Kutub Shah, and endeavour, to use Aurangzeb's own words, to "lighten his body of the burden of his head".

In the meantime the King of Golconda had received Shah Jehan's letter demanding the release of the captives in the fortress, and immediately complied with it.

Mohammed Amin and his family, now at liberty, travelled towards the frontier and met Mohammed Sultan about twenty-four miles from the city of Hyderabad. Mohammed Sultan, followed by his cavalry escort, all riding at full speed, now headed for the Hussein Sagar Tank, situated two miles outside the walls of the Kutub Shahi capital, which point of vantage they reached on January 24.

The strength of the Moghul prince's escort brought Abdullah Kutub Shah to the realisation of the trap which had been laid for him. Leaving Hyderabad entirely undefended to the mercy of the invaders, the King, his family and entire court sought refuge within the walls of the hitherto impregnable quadruple fortress of Golconda. Mohammed Sultan and his troops entered the Kutub Shahi capital, which for two entire days was subjected to all the horrors of a sack. The Moghul prince occupied the royal palace and commanded his men to plunder it of the greater part of its treasures, including the library of unique and priceless manuscripts collected by generations of the highly cultured sovereigns of Golconda.

The treacherous plans of Prince Aurangzeb had, however, not met with the success he had hoped for; his son had failed to achieve the suggested murder of Abdullah Kutub

Shah, as also the annexation of the King of Golconda's dominions, other than the capital. Determined, if possible, to make good this failure, Aurangzeb, at the head of a powerful army, now marched to the assistance of his son, whom he joined outside the gates of the fortress of Golconda. A steady bombardment was kept up by the Moghuls from February 7 to March 30, but even their heaviest guns proved useless against this stronghold, which constituted a city in itself. The King of Golconda gained heart from the knowledge, received through the agency of one of his envoys at Delhi, that the treacherous attack upon his kingdom had been undertaken without the authorisation of the Emperor. He also knew that whilst the heir apparent, Prince Dara Shekoh, was Shah Jehan's favourite son, relations between this Prince and his brother Aurangzeb were at all times strained, and on the strength, principally, of these differences between the brothers, Abdullah Kutub Shah instructed his ambassador at Delhi to endeavour to enlist the sympathies of the heir apparent on his behalf. The success of this diplomatic move was far greater than the King of Golconda had dared to hope.

His ambassador promptly won over Prince Dara Shekoh, and also gained the assistance of the Emperor's daughter, the gentle Jehanara, who, ever anxious to help in the cause of peace, joined her brother in pleading with Shah Jehan for the freedom of Golconda.

The Emperor had never desired war with the Kutub Shahi state, and would only have consented to it in the event of the King of Golconda's refusal to release Mohammed Amin. Aurangzeb's high-handed and independent action had roused him to intense anger, and he immediately sent a letter, worded in the sternest possible language, to his son commanding him instantly to raise the siege of Golconda, to conclude a fresh treaty of peace with the King, and then to withdraw with his troops to Aurangabad. Simultaneously almost with the arrival of this severe expression of the Emperor's displeasure, and the terms insisted upon by him, Mir Jumla, at the head of his personal army, reached the camp of the besiegers from the Carnatic, hoping to be able to assist his confederate in executing the plan for which he himself had been so largely responsible.

The Emperor enforces peace with Golconda.

Aurangzeb, however, to his extreme regret, had at that moment no choice but to conform to his father's orders, and accordingly, on April 13, peace was concluded with Abdullah Kutub Shah, who not only agreed to pay a large sum

into the imperial treasury, but also, in order to conciliate Aurangzeb, bestowed upon Prince Mohammed Sultan the hand of his second daughter in marriage.

The peace treaty duly signed, Aurangzeb retired across the frontier to his own viceroyalty and Mir Jumla proceeded to Delhi, where the Emperor was so greatly impressed by his personality and rare gifts, that he very soon appointed him Wazir of the empire in place of the great Sadullah Khan, recently deceased.

With the enrolment of Mir Jumla amongst Shah Jehan's leading *Mansabdars*, his personal *jagir*, the Golconda Carnatic, became the property of the empire.

Aurangzeb had, in spite of the failure of their first joint intrigue, gained a devoted adherent in Mir Jumla, who, occupying the highest office in the state, was naturally always conversant with all the tangled politics of the Deccan courts and was thus in a position to be of invaluable assistance to him in his next independent project, that of overthrowing the Adil Shah's kingdom of Bijapur.

Peace had reigned between Shah Jehan and Mohammed Adil Shah, but for an occasional passing cloud, for fully ten years now, and the ruler of Bijapur had proved himself, with the one exception of Yusuf, founder of the dynasty, the greatest and most able monarch of his house.

Awakening of Maharashtra. Rise of Sivaji Bhonsle.

Religious tolerance was shown alike to Hindu and Musulman, and yet, through no fault of the sovereign himself, his reign saw the reawakening, after many centuries, of the warlike spirit of Maharashtra brought back to actuality by one of the greatest and most romantic personalities which the history of India has ever known.

Two sons had been born to Shahaji Bhonsle by his marriage with Jijabai, daughter of Lakhoji Jadhavrao the elder, Sambhaji in 1623, the younger, named Sivaji, in April 1627.

The union between Shahaji and his wife had been a happy one and continued so until the year 1630, when suddenly the Mahratta chieftain conceived a violent passion for Tukabai, a girl belonging to a family of the name of Mohite, well known in Maharashtra, whom he made his second wife.

Shahaji Bhonsle had not, by this action, committed any offence against the laws of his country, which recognised polygamy, but Jijabai's proud spirit revolted at the thought that she, a descendant of the Yadava kings, should be called upon to share her lord's affections with one who, though a member of an ancient and honourable house, could not claim

to be of royal birth, and from this time onwards Shahaji and his wife began steadily to drift apart, the estrangement becoming even more accentuated in the year 1636, when the Mahratta commander entered the service of the King of Bijapur.

Shahaji rapidly rose to favour with Mohammed Adil Shah, who, in the following year, entrusted him with the leadership of a military expedition to the Central and Southern Carnatic, the aim of which was to force the local Hindu chiefs to accept the suzerainty of Bijapur.

Shahaji fully justified the King's confidence, and within a brief period had overrun the whole of that portion of the Mysore plateau which comprised the districts of Bangalore and Sera. Continuing their progress under their able commander, the Bijapur troops penetrated into the heart of the Tamil South, annexing the stronghold of Jinji, as also the city of Tanjore, the ancient capital of the Cholas, to the Adil Shahi kingdom. All the conquered districts were bestowed by his sovereign upon Shahaji as his personal *jagirs* in grateful recognition of his services. Shahaji spent the following ten years almost entirely in these *jagirs* in the company of his elder son, Sambhaji, and having with him also Vyankoji, the child born to him by his second wife, Tukabai, who was destined eventually to become the founder of the Southern Mahratta dynasty of Tanjore.

Meanwhile Jijabai continued to reside in her consort's original Deccan *jagir* of Poona, neglected by Shahaji, but having with her her second son, Sivaji, between whom and herself there existed the deepest affection. Her only other solace was derived from her intense belief in and devotion to the rites of the Hindu faith. In Jijabai's mind religion was closely interwoven with political and nationalistic ideals; in fact it merged into these. Hinduism can be far better described as a vast religious federation than as one great all-comprising faith, and this for the reason that it numbers alike amongst its followers those who pay homage to the beautiful spiritual conceptions of the Vedas and Puranas, as well as many to whom the crude demon worship of the South makes strong appeal.

Within the folds of Hinduism new sects and sub-sects have constantly arisen, some almost in direct contradiction to others, such as those where even the rigid laws of caste have been modified. One of the most notable of these was that founded as far back as 1228 at Pandharpur in Maharashtra, the basis of which was the worship of Krishna

under his local name of Vithoba. The first of the line of Hindu saints and exponents of this faith at Pandharpur was the son of a Brahmin who had lost his caste ; he was succeeded by Chokhamela who belonged to the despised caste of Mahars (leather-workers) ; and the most famous of all to occupy this position was none other than the religious poet, Namdeo, by trade a tailor. This poet's sacred verses, the commentary treatise written by Dnyandeo on the Bhagavat Gita, the oration by the Hero of Mathura before the great battle of the Mahabharata, which is actually looked upon as the foundation of the ideals and morality of the modern Hindu, were written not in Sanskrit but in Marathi, the teachings of the eighth incarnation of Vishnu being thus made accessible to the many millions of people to whom the classic language of the Brahmin was unknown. The worship of Vithoba became the local religion of the Mahrattas, and created amongst them, by its far less rigid views in regard to caste, a sense of nationality unknown to Hindus in other parts of India.

Jijabai, herself an ardent devotee of Vithoba, with the assistance of a learned Brahmin named Dadoji Kondeo, the land agent of Shahaji's Poona estates, initiated her son into the doctrines of the saints of Pandharpur and deeply impressed the receptive mind of the youthful Sivaji with the wonderful stories of the great epics, never failing to apply them as illustrating the terrible change from the glories of the past to the degradation of the present. She would speak to him of the days when the rule of a Hindu monarch and the worship of the Hindu gods had been dominant in the land and when Hindu women could wander about unprotected, secure in the reverence for their sex which the tradition of Sita, Draupadi and Damayanti had fostered in the male population of the country ; and she would compare to it the dangers arising to Maharashtra from the rule of the Moslem who had no regard for Hindu faith, nor any sense of chivalry towards the Hindu maiden, liable at any moment to be seized and carried off to the harems of the lawless Abyssinian, Arab and Afghan chieftains who thronged the court of Bijapur. His mother's teaching and her influence generally made a profound impression upon the receptive, chivalrous mind of Sivaji, in whose veins flowed the blood of Rama and Sita, and whose maternal ancestors had ruled in the very place where the Moghul viceroy now held court.

Gradually the young Mahratta began to regard himself in the light of the destined champion of his country and of

his faith, and there rallied round him, determined to help him to attain his aim, three playmates of his early youth, themselves petty Mahratta vassals of Bijapur. These were Baji Phasalkar, Yesaji Kank and Tanaji Malusre, and a few years later they were joined by a fourth, a Brahmin named Moro Pant Pingle.

In 1646 Sivaji took the first step towards challenging the power of Bijapur by the seizure of the fort of Torna, and in the ensuing year followed up this success by the occupation of the great stronghold of Kondana, a most important strategical point in Maharashtra. The Prince changed the name of Kondana to that of Singhgarh, or the Lions' Fort, under which it figured prominently in the later annals of the Mahrattas. In the same year the appointed manager of his father's estates in Poona died, and Sivaji, now of full age, took that duty upon his own shoulders, and furthermore assumed personal command over the local vassals. Assisted by the forces they were able to place at his disposal, Sivaji gained possession of nine forts in the state of Bijapur, and a detachment of his cavalry, under the leadership of a Brahmin officer named Abaji Sondeo, occupied the important town of Kalyan, whence the Moslem governor, Maulana Ahmed, was expelled. The young chief's rebellion against Bijapur affected as a matter of course the position of Shahaji, his father, at the court ; and Mohammed Adil Shah commanded him to bring about his son's submission, if necessary by force. Shahaji, as one of the most powerful nobles of the Adil Shah's court, had no desire to quarrel with Bijapur and lost no time in sending a letter, couched in severe terms, to his son, but Sivaji practically ignored his father's remonstrances and merely replied that, having attained full age, he assumed entire responsibility for his actions.

The King of Bijapur, wrongly suspecting Shahaji to be the secret instigator of his son's revolt, had the former placed under arrest and threatened for some days with that most terrible of punishments, meted out to traitors, that of being walled up alive. Eventually, however, the King received convincing proof of his vassal's complete innocence and instantly ordered his release.

Inconclusive peace between Bijapur and Sivaji.

A very superficial peace was concluded with Sivaji, who was allowed to retain the captured forts as the vassal of Bijapur.

Invasion of Bijapur by Aurangzeb.

The death, on November 4, 1656, of Mohammed Adil Shah was followed by the accession to the throne of his son Ali Adil Shah II., and this change provided Aurangzeb, who

had never recovered from the humiliation he had suffered at Golconda, with the longed-for opportunity to try to make good his failure there by conquering the neighbouring kingdom.

Aurangzeb, persuading Shah Jehan that the new ruler was not the legal heir to the throne, but a pretender who had been brought into the harem as a child, obtained the Emperor's permission to invade Bijapur. Assisted by strong reinforcements under the command of Mir Jumla, whom Shah Jehan despatched to the Deccan from Delhi, the Prince, on January 18, 1657, crossed the frontier into the Adil Shah's kingdom.

At the outset the Moghuls were entirely successful; Bidar, the former capital of the Bahmani and Barid Shahi kings, was, after a month's siege, taken by assault, and the Bijapur army suffered a crushing defeat near Kalyani, which city was in consequence forced to capitulate.

Aurangzeb, flushed with victory, was preparing to advance against the capital Bijapur when instructions from Delhi once more prevented him from carrying out his ambitious plans.

Mir Jumla's departure to the Deccan, whilst of great military assistance to Aurangzeb, had deprived the Prince of one of his most able spokesmen at the imperial court, and in his absence Prince Dara Shekoh took up the cudgels in defence of the King of Bijapur, as he had previously done in the case of the monarch of Golconda, and succeeded in convincing the Emperor of the complete legitimacy of the claim of Ali Adil Shah II. The result was an imperial firman despatched to Aurangzeb instructing him instantly to conclude peace with Bijapur; to demand from the new king the cession of Bidar, Kalyani and certain other districts to the Moghul empire; and to retire as soon as these conditions had been complied with. Aurangzeb had no choice but to obey the imperial command, but he set out on the homeward march, his heart and mind filled to overflowing with fury and bitterness against his father, and still more against the brother who had been instrumental in frustrating his plans.

This tragedy of blighted hopes and ambitions unsatisfied eventually led to the terrible calamity which began to threaten India and its hapless population, from the moment of Aurangzeb's recall from Bijapur.

Children of Shah Jehan. Dara Shekoh.

The principal actors in the great drama which was preparing were the children of Shah Jehan. The heir to the

throne, Prince Dara Shekoh, known by the high title of Shah-i-Buland-Ikbal, or Prince of Lofty Fortune, was both remarkable and versatile in character. Warm-hearted and generous, his impulsive nature sometimes asserted itself in a certain arrogance towards the nobles of his father's court if any word or action of theirs aroused his displeasure.

He was the idol of the populace of Delhi, both Musulman and Hindu, for, in his dealings with them, and especially with the poor and needy, his kindness and charity were never appealed to in vain.

His religion was that of the liberal Islamic school founded in Akbar's day, his principal spiritual adviser being Mian Mir, the celebrated Musulman saint of Lahore. One of his closest friends was the Sufi teacher, Sarmad, by origin a Jew from Kashan in Persia, and association with him not only brought a considerable element of the mysticism and philosophy of the Sufis into the Islam the Prince had adopted, but also made him thoroughly acquainted with the teachings of the Talmud. Dara Shekoh believed, as Akbar and Abul Fazl had believed in their day, that in spite of the numerous outward discrepancies, the Musulman and Hindu faiths were not fundamentally opposed to each other.

Allahabad, the province over which Dara Shekoh governed, held the holy city of Benares, and the Prince counted amongst his friends many of the learned Brahmin pandits who dwelt within its gates. With their assistance the Prince undertook and completed the translation of the Upanishads, the great Sanskrit commentaries on the Vedas, into Persian, and followed up this formidable work by another to which he gave the significant title of "The Mingling of two Oceans", and in which he strove to show the close resemblance between Hindu philosophy and the doctrines of the Sufi school of Islamic thought. His desire for spiritual enlightenment caused him also to study the tenets of the Roman Catholic faith under the able guidance of the Flemish priest, Father Henri Buzée, a member of the Jesuit Mission at Delhi, who eventually became one of his closest friends.

Prince Dara Shekoh's views on religion, above all his longing to see religious tolerance for all time firmly established, may be summed up in the simple but beautiful lines of a contemporary Sufi poet: "All this talk of religion and infidelity finally leads to one place. The dream is the same dream, only the interpretations differ".[1]

[1] Saib Tabrizi. See *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, April 1925.

The relations existing between the Emperor and the heir apparent were of the warmest. Shah Jehan placed implicit confidence in his son, and as he himself grew older, proved it by delegating to Prince Dara Shekoh a considerable portion of imperial authority and allowing him a free hand to deal with, and settle, many important questions without referring them to the sovereign. The Prince in durbar occupied a golden chair placed only very slightly beneath the throne, and the Emperor had conferred upon him the hitherto unprecedented rank of commander of 40,000.

Before completing the portrait of the heir to the throne, it is also necessary to throw some light upon the great romance of his life brought into it by his marriage to his third wife, a Hindu dancing girl residing at Delhi, known by the name of Ra-na-dil, or "Clear Heart", and famed throughout the North of India for her rare beauty.

Dara had married as his first wife his cousin Nadira Begum, the daughter of Prince Parviz; and as his second, a Georgian slave girl of the palace, named Udipuri; his third consort he had met some years previously when, together with many young nobles of the court of Delhi, he frequented the house inhabited by the beautiful Hindu dancing girl. The handsome and brilliant young Prince soon completely won the heart of Ra-na-dil, who consented to give up the life she had hitherto led and to enter his harem as his mistress. In the eyes of the law of Islam the position now occupied by Ra-na-dil was in no way one of degradation, but Dara's chivalrous nature rebelled against the thought that the woman he loved above all others and in whom he may already then have divined qualities unusual in one of her class, should accupy a status beneath that of his other two consorts.

He begged permission of Shah Jehan to make her his wife according to the most binding rites of the Moslem code, and he further besought his father, after the marriage, to raise her to the full rank and dignity of an imperial princess. His son's request at first produced a startling effect upon the Emperor, who not unnaturally hesitated to confer honours of so high an order upon a former nautch girl, but he could never find it in his heart permanently to refuse any request of the son he loved so dearly; and in due course he gave his consent, and the marriage being duly solemnised, Ra-na-dil became, by adoption, a princess of the House of Timur.

Shuja. Prince Shuja, Viceroy of Bengal and the second son of

Shah Jehan, had become a convert to the Shiah branch of Islam, which secured for him the warm support of the Persian element at the court of Delhi. He was a man of high intellect and of kindly and generous disposition, and ruled his rich territory with wisdom and success.

Aurangzeb.

Events previously recorded in these pages have left little room for doubt as to the unlovable nature of the Emperor's third son, Prince Aurangzeb, but they may have failed to reveal the arrant hypocrisy which was the real keynote of his character.

A rigidly orthodox Sunni Musulman, clothed as a rule in the plainest of white garments, he moved about with eyes cast to the ground, the very embodiment of humility, and would assert on all possible occasions that his military expeditions to the Deccan had been undertaken, not by his own desire, which was to exchange the sword for the rosary of the Moslem ascetic and spend the remainder of his days in prayer, but solely in deference to his father's wishes and interests. Polite in manner to all who approached him, he took none into his confidence.

Prince Dara alone formed a correct estimate of his brother's disposition, and was wont to remark, "There is only one of my brothers whom I fear, the Prayer-Monger".[1]

Murad Bakhsh.

Prince Murad Bakhsh, the Emperor's youngest son, was not devoid of noble qualities; he was by nature brave, generous, frank and honourable, but unfortunately he had inherited the family curse of intemperance, and when under its influence, would commit indefensible acts of cruelty and of violence.

Jehanara.

The beautiful nature of Princess Jehanara is already known to us. When still quite young, she had sought to establish a better understanding between Dara and Aurangzeb, although her affection and sympathy centred far more in her eldest brother, whose faith she shared as an ardent follower of the Sufis; she was one with him also in his unswerving devotion to their father.

Roshanara.

Her younger sister, Roshanara, whose birth was followed by the tragedy of her mother's death, was in all respects, physical and moral, the reverse of the gentle Jehanara. Nature had withheld from her both the beauty and the varied gifts so generously bestowed upon Jehanara, but had endowed her with a brilliant and caustic wit, which found expression in the most bitter utterances. From the moment of her earliest recollections, she had felt herself put in the

[1] See Manucci, *Storia do Mogor*, vol. i. p. 229.

background and had realised that her father's affection for her possessed none of the intensity which marked his relations with Dara and Jehanara. Embittered by this, her mind became obsessed with hatred against her eldest brother and sister, and made of her the confidante and tool of the scheming Aurangzeb.

Illness of Shah Jehan.

On September 6, 1657, Shah Jehan was suddenly seized with serious illness and for a week his life was almost despaired of, but gradually his condition began to improve and his physicians advised change of air as the most necessary means for the Emperor to recover his strength.

Dara Shekoh proclaimed heir.

Before leaving Delhi for Agra, which city he had selected for convalescence and at which he arrived on November 26, Shah Jehan, feeling greatly weakened by his severe illness, came to the conviction that his days were numbered, and in the presence of all the leading nobles of his court, solemnly nominated Dara Shekoh his heir, and from that moment practically placed the entire government of the empire in his son's hands.

Revolt of Shuja and Murad Bakhsh.

Dara, faithful to his trust, strove to meet his great responsibilities in the most loyal spirit, but the news of his accession to power aroused feelings of intense jealousy in his brothers Shuja and Murad Bakhsh, who, fully convinced of the imminence of the Emperor's death, determined to contest by force of arms Dara's claims to the throne. Shuja took the first step towards rebellion by publicly assuming the title of King at his viceregal capital of Raj Mahal, and was closely followed by Murad who, on December 5, proclaimed himself Emperor at Ahmedabad with the title of Maruwuj-ud-Din, first putting to death his Diwan, Ali Naki, who had tried to dissuade him from such a step.

Attitude of Aurangzeb.

Aurangzeb alone appeared to accept the situation without demur, and to continue in the regular performance of his rightful duties of Viceroy of the Deccan.

Prince Dara, however, was not deceived by this mild attitude of the " Prayer-Monger ", and was much more disturbed by his apparent calm than by the unmistakable hostility of his other two brothers.

The heir apparent marked his assumption of the reins of government by immediately removing from office his father's Wazir, Mir Jumla, and it was this act which made it necessary for Aurangzeb to exercise extreme caution in his further movements. Mir Jumla, though devoted to Aurangzeb's interests and desirous of placing his well-trained personal army and fine park of artillery at the

Prince's disposal in any attempt on his part to advance northwards, was, for the time being, prevented from doing so by the fact that his son, Mohammed Amin, was retained at the court as hostage for Mir Jumla's loyalty.

It was not long, however, before the crafty minds of Aurangzeb and the former Wazir had devised a scheme worthy of a Machiavelli to deceive Prince Dara.

Aurangzeb summoned Mir Jumla to appear before him in open durbar, and after publicly arraigning him for his ingratitude towards himself, had him arrested and imprisoned within the fortress of Daulatabad. When the news of the ex-Wazir's arrest reached the imperial court, the Emperor and Prince Dara, far from suspecting the deception which was being practised upon them, believed that Mir Jumla was paying the penalty of his loyalty to them, and, in appreciation of his supposed fidelity, showered favours upon his son.

Aurangzeb declares for Murad Bakhsh.

Aurangzeb appropriated Mir Jumla's entire artillery, and having incorporated it into his own army, thought the moment ripe to strike the first blow by declaring his intention of supporting the claim of his brother Prince Murad Bakhsh to the throne of India.

The letter which he sent to Murad to acquaint him with his proposed efforts on his behalf was typical of the hypocrisy with which he always put forward his religious views as a cloak for his political designs. In this letter he branded Dara as an idolater and consorter with infidels of all faiths; he further emphasised that Murad alone was, by his noble qualities, fitted to rule over the empire, Shuja being disqualified as a Shiah, and he himself, once assured of his beloved brother Murad's accession to the throne, having but one desire—to end his days in the cell of a dervish.

Shuja supports his brothers against Dara.

Murad enthusiastically welcomed his brother's support, knowing him to be possessed not only of great military gifts, but also of a powerful army; and the two princes were shortly joined by Prince Shuja, who, acting under the totally unfounded belief that Shah Jehan's illness was due to poison slowly and stealthily administered by Dara, determined to assist his brothers in frustrating his claims to the throne.

Shuja advanced from Bengal at the head of his troops and entered the Upper Gangetic Valley, whilst Aurangzeb and Murad led their armies from their respective seats of government into Malwa, where they joined forces on April 14, 1658, near the village of Dharmat, situated some miles south-west of Ujjain.

Meanwhile, events were moving also at the imperial court,

Counter-moves at the court.

and, as a result of many long and earnest conferences between the Emperor, Prince Dara and the Princess Jehanara, it had been agreed that the heir apparent should remain at Agra to administer the government and to protect his father in case of need; that a force under the joint command of Prince Dara's eldest son, Prince Sulaiman Shekoh, and of Mirza-Raja Jai Singh, should proceed against Shuja; and that one of the greatest of the Hindu feudatories of the empire, Maharaja Jaswant Singh of Marwar, should be given the command of the main army destined to act against Murad and Aurangzeb. Dara's reasons for making this latter appointment were based chiefly upon his conviction that he himself was personally endeared to the Rajputs because of his frank dealings with them and his openly avowed sympathy with their religious beliefs, in return for which they would fight for him unto death; and also upon the sure knowledge that his sister Roshanara was unceasingly intriguing at court in favour of her brother Aurangzeb, who, especially amongst the Moslem nobles, was far more popular than the heir apparent himself.

The army led by Jaswant Singh into Malwa included, in addition to his own Rathor clansmen from Marwar, those of the cadet branch of Ratlam under their prince, Ratan Singh, and also the entire forces of the Haras of Kotah commanded by their chief, Rao Mukund Singh.

Aurangzeb, when informed of the near approach of this formidable army, sought once again to avert the danger by resorting to a cunning plan. He sent a Brahmin, named Kavi Rai, to Jaswant's headquarters at Ujjain with the mission to persuade the latter to withdraw to his own capital of Jodhpur, assuring him that he could safely do so as he, Aurangzeb, was not actuated by any warlike intentions, but was merely going to Agra to visit his father.

The Rajput prince was proof against this astuteness and sent the following blunt reply: "I must carry out the Emperor's orders. I cannot retrace my steps without disgrace".[1]

Battle of Dharmat.

On April 15 at dawn, the opposing forces of almost equal strength came into contact near Dharmat. A fierce battle ensued, fortune at first seeming to favour the imperialists.

Jaswant Singh maintained the method of warfare traditional to his race and endeavoured to pierce his enemies' ranks and capture their guns in one wild charge. The cry of

[1] Jadunath Sarkar, *History of Aurangzib*, vol. ii. chap. xv. p. 349.

"Ram Ram, Sita Ram!"[1] thundered out incessantly from the imperial lines as the Rajputs of the vanguard galloped forth under the leadership of Mukund Singh of Kotah.

Aurangzeb's artillery, served by Indians, answering to the signal of their commander, Murshid Kuli, now allowed their guns full play; but they were powerless to stay the onslaught of the Rajputs, who, totally indifferent to their fire, rode into their very midst and flung themselves upon the foe.

Murshid Kuli perished bravely at his post, and it is more than probable that, but for the park of artillery formerly the property of Mir Jumla, which had been kept in reserve and which, manned by skilled English and French gunners, was now commanded by Aurangzeb to go into action, the claim of Shah Jehan's youngest son to his father's throne would have received its death-blow on the field of Dharmat. A pitiless fire was, however, poured into the dense mass of Rajputs, who, undaunted, were almost touching the muzzles of the cannon, and whose gallant leader, Mukund Singh, fell mortally wounded, together with his six brothers, these constituting all the adult princes of the house of Kotah. At the conclusion of the battle the body of Ratan Singh[2] of Ratlam was found covered with wounds.

Jaswant Singh still survived, and, rallying the imperial army, made a gallant attempt to turn the fortunes of war; but Roshanara had not been idle, and as a result of her unceasing intrigues at the court, had succeeded in inducing Devi Singh Bundela of Orchha, one of the few Hindu *Mansabdars* who had always at heart been a supporter of Aurangzeb, to desert at the critical moment with all his clansmen from the Emperor's banner. This example was quickly followed by a Moghul contingent under the command of an officer named Kasim Khan, which defections left Jaswant Singh and his personal vassals alone to cope with a situation becoming at every moment more untenable. The battle continued without interruption for eight hours more, and 7000 gallant Rathor clansmen sacrificed their lives in the Emperor's cause.

Their Maharaja at first tried to meet his death upon the field where the flower of his army lay, declaring that to live after such a defeat would reflect dishonour upon his name; but at length he was deterred from his intentions by the

[1] Rama and Sita, the divine hero and heroine of the Rajputs.

[2] A splendid monument in white marble has been erected on the battlefield of Dharmat by the present Rajah of Ratlam to commemorate the heroic death of his ancestor.

supplications of his minister, Askaran, Thakur of Drunera, and retreated to Jodhpur attended by the small remnant of those " 40,000 Rathor swords " which had constituted the boast of Marwar.

Victory of the rebel brothers. Dara takes the field.

The news of Jaswant Singh's failure had caused great consternation at the imperial court, but the stout-hearted Dara was determined not to be discouraged by this defeat and implored Shah Jehan to allow him to lead his own army into Malwa and to use every effort to stay the rebel advance. It was some time before the Emperor would give his permission, and when at length he agreed, it was with sorrow and foreboding.

There is no more moving scene in Indian history than that which depicts the parting of Shah Jehan from his favourite son, the only one who had always behaved towards his father with loyalty and affection. The Emperor held Prince Dara in close embrace as though incapable of letting him go, but at length he raised his hands in prayer and called the blessing of Allah and His Prophet down upon the son who was to go forth and fight for the empire.

Dara, overcome with emotion, seemed for the moment speechless, and making a reverent salaam to his father, prepared to take his departure, but, as he was leaving the Hall of Audience, his natural buoyancy reasserted itself and there issued from his lips in clear tones the words of a proverb often applied by members of the house of Timur, and in this instance of prophetic meaning, " Ya Takht ya Tabut " (The Throne or the Tomb). Shah Jehan, as though turned to stone, stood with grief-stricken eyes watching for the last glimpse of the gallant young figure which he was destined never again to behold in life.

The Prince's exit from the gates of Agra at the head of his army on that bright spring morning was an inspiriting sight. Dara was seated on a magnificently caparisoned elephant of gigantic proportions, and was closely followed by squadron upon squadron of Rajput cavalry clad in richly inlaid armour and under the command of some of the most renowned of their princes, notably Chhatrasal, Maharao of Bundi and Raja Ram Singh Rathor, Prince of Kishangarh, head of one of the many junior lines of the royal house of Marwar. The most distinguished amongst the Moslem officers accompanying the heir apparent were the Rohilla Afghan, Dilir Khan, one of his devoted adherents; and Khalilullah Khan, Governor of Delhi. The strength of the army was further added to by a powerful train of artillery

commanded by the Venetian, Niccolao Manucci, to whose brilliant pen we are indebted for so much of the knowledge we possess of these stirring days.

On May 22 Dara reached the Chambal at Dholpur, and, losing no time in seizing all the fords of whose existence he knew, prepared to render the passage across the river impossible for his brothers at any of these points. Aurangzeb, however, was fortunate in having amongst his most reliable officers Subhkaran Bundela, Raja of Datia, who made him acquainted with a notorious Bundela robber chief named Champat Rao. This man, who was familiar with every inch of his wild country, guided the rebel army to a ford known to him alone, and, directed by him, Aurangzeb, Murad and their troops crossed the river. Thus before the luckless Dara fully realised his peril, he found himself threatened from behind, and in the hasty retreat to Agra, which was the only means of saving his army, was compelled to abandon some of his guns.

Battle of Samugarh.

Murad and Aurangzeb were now able to advance rapidly, and, on May 29, came into contact with Dara and his forces on the plain of Samugarh, some eight miles from the city of Agra, where a mortal combat ensued.

In the olden days, before Akbar's policy of conciliation had united Hindu and Musulman in faithful service to his house, the Rajputs were always clad in saffron-coloured robes when going into battle against the "Toork", this being the symbol of their choice of death rather than dishonour.

On this occasion the Rajputs of Dara's army donned the saffron robe in proof of their fidelity to the Musulman prince, and, when Chhatrasal Hara, heading the imperial advance guard, went forth to meet the rebels, the impression to them was as of some huge yellow flower-bed moving towards their lines. With customary disregard of danger, the Rajputs, invoking the aid of their gods, charged full into their enemies' ranks, the Prince of Bundi hoping to divide the forces commanded by Aurangzeb and Murad and thus to prepare the ground for Dara and the main army.

Dara, mounted on his elephant, now personally led the centre of the troops into the way cleared for them by the Rajputs, and, but for the treachery of Khalilullah Khan, Governor of Delhi, it is more than probable that he would have gained complete victory by following along the ground so successfully prepared for him. Khalilullah Khan, who was in command of the right wing of the imperial army,

which hitherto had taken but little part in the struggle, rode up to Prince Dara and spoke the following words to him :

I know well that I have been in many battles and campaigns, and beheld the mighty deeds of renowned warriors, yet never have I heard of a prince like your Highness, who, appearing for the first time in the battlefield, accomplished such valiant acts. One thing alone remains to display to the world your qualities, that is the capture of Aurangzeb. I feel compassion for the fatigues your Highness has already undergone, but it would be wrong to lose such a good opportunity. Yonder stands Aurangzeb with a scanty following ; let us go at once and seize him, as can be done without any difficulty. Let your Highness be pleased to descend from your elephant and mount your horse and ride at the head of your own cavalry and the squadrons committed to my charge. We will go together to the attack. It was for this alone that I saved my division, seeing that up to now there was no necessity for my engaging.[1]

Not allowing himself time to consider the wisdom of this suggestion, Dara, with wonted impetuosity, unhesitatingly accepted Khalilullah's advice. The soldiers, no longer able to catch sight of the inspiring figure of their commander seated on his majestic elephant, believed him to have fallen in the fray, with the result that the greater part of his army became entirely disorganised. The traitor who had brought about the disaster made use of this wild state of confusion to head his own division and promptly to join forces with Aurangzeb. That fatal moment decided the issue in favour of the rebels, but Dara's Rajputs never wavered and accomplished almost superhuman feats of valour in their desperate efforts to change the fortunes of war.

One of their leaders, Raja Rup Singh Rathor, flung himself from his charger, and, cutting his way towards Aurangzeb's elephant, attempted with his *tulwar* to sever the girths of the Prince's howdah and thus to bring him to the ground.

Unlike himself, Aurangzeb was stirred almost to admiration for this act of courage, and, in a generous impulse, called to his guards to spare the hero's life ; but his voice failed to reach them or was unheeded, and Rup Singh, assailed on all sides, fell to the ground mortally wounded.

The end of Maharao Chhatrasal of Bundi reads like a page from one of the ancient epics. Standing erect in the howdah of his elephant, he shouted forth the following words : " Accursed be he who flies ! Here true to my salt,

[1] Manucci, *Storia do Mogor*, vol. i. p. 281.

my feet are rooted to this field, nor will I quit it alive but with victory"[1]. This inspiring utterance had scarcely issued from the Maharao's lips, when a cannon-ball struck his elephant and caused it to turn, trumpeting with fright, in an attempt to flee. Undaunted even by this, Chhatrasal sprang from the howdah and mounted his horse, and with the cry, "My elephant may turn his back on the enemy but never shall his master",[2] rode into the thick of the fight.

These words were destined to be his last, for almost immediately a cannon-ball struck him in the forehead, causing instantaneous death. His brother Mokim Singh, and the Maharao's youngest son, Bharat Singh, together with two of his nephews and several thousand of their heroic clansmen, perished with him on the field.

Defeat of the imperial army.

As night fell upon the scene of the disaster, the only sounds to be heard were the groans of the wounded and dying, and the pale moon shone upon a small group of exhausted men—Dara and the remnant of his great army, who, mounted upon their weary steeds, rode slowly back to Agra.

The rebel princes were but a few miles from the city, but Shah Jehan's mind was not concerned with the grave menace to his throne; one thought only held sway and that was to comfort his beloved son in his adversity and to assure him that he looked upon his defeat as a decree of fate and as in no way due to any fault on his part.

He begged Dara to visit him in order that he might personally speak words of consolation and of encouragement, but Prince Dara sent the following touching message in reply:

> I have not the face to appear before your Majesty in my present wretched plight. Then again if I stay here longer, the troops of death will encircle and slay me. Give up your wish to see my abashed face and permit me to go away.
>
> Only I beg your Majesty to pronounce the benediction of farewell on this distracted and half-dead man in the long journey that he has before him.[3]

After resting for a few hours in his own mansion at Agra, Dara, having placed Udipuri and his beloved Ra-na-dil under his father's protection, left the city, accompanied only

[1] Tod's *Rajasthan*, vol. ii. p. 389.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] Sarkar, *History of Aurangzib*, vol. ii. chap. xvii. p. 68.

by his principal wife, Nadira Begum, and his second son, Sipihr Shekoh, on the first stage of the long and pitiful journey which was destined to have such a tragic close.

Capture of Agra by the rebels.

By his hurried departure from Agra, Dara had only just avoided the victorious armies, who entered the city on June 5, when Prince Mohammed Sultan, Aurangzeb's eldest son, was immediately appointed Governor. The pretence originally put forward that the rebel princes' movements were directed only against their brother Dara, whom they accused of having usurped the throne, and not against the supremacy of the Emperor, was now completely dropped, and acting under orders from his father, Prince Mohammed Sultan called upon Shah Jehan to surrender.

In spite of the fact that the total garrison of the fort palace numbered only 1500 slaves of foreign origin, the Emperor sent an uncompromising refusal to this outrageous demand, to which Aurangzeb retaliated by ordering his son to cut off the water supply and closely besiege the imperial residence.

Shah Jehan, advanced in years and permanently weakened by his recent illness, was, by this cruel order, reduced to quenching his thirst with small draughts of brackish water from the well of the fortress, in place of the pure fresh water from the Jumna.

On June 8 the Emperor's physical sufferings forced him to yield, and Mohammed Sultan, heading his troops, entered the fort. Outwardly the fallen sovereign was treated by the Prince with a certain amount of courtesy, but from the moment of his surrender he became a prisoner, under closest supervision, within the harem.

Deposition and imprisonment of Shah Jehan.

The long and glorious reign of Shah Jehan ended thus ignominiously, and the traitorous son who had been the main factor in bringing about his ruin, hypocrite always and above all in his hour of supreme triumph, never ceased to attribute his crowning victory to the intervention of the Almighty.

Roshanara Begum, who had been so greatly instrumental in bringing about her father's downfall, now left the fort to join Aurangzeb, but his favourite daughter, the gentle Jehanara, remained with the Emperor, sharing the bitterness of his adversity as she had formerly shared his days of glory, and never leaving him until the hour of his death.

After placing the fort of Agra and its prisoners in charge of one of his most trusted servants, a eunuch named Itibar Khan, Aurangzeb and Murad, on June 13, left the city at

the head of their troops and marched towards Delhi, making a halt ten days later at Kolighat near the town of Mathura.

Although the battle of Samugarh had been won principally as a result of Aurangzeb's personal skill, both military and diplomatic, the elder Prince pretended to give his brother Murad Bakhsh the entire credit for it, and congratulating him upon his prowess in the field, addressed him as the lawful Emperor of Hindustan, declaring that he had won the throne by the gallantry which he had displayed and which had led to so complete a victory. With his own hand he cleansed the wounds which Murad had sustained in the fight. His astrologers fixed upon June 25 as the day on which the final stage of this tragedy of deception should be reached. Aurangzeb invited his brother to a great banquet in his camp on that day, which was to be followed by the ceremony of Murad's enthronement as Emperor.

On the appointed day the young Prince mounted his horse, and attended only by his chief officers and by Shahbaz, his body servant, a faithful eunuch, rode towards his brother's camp. Shortly after starting, he was accosted by an officer, Ibrahim Khan by name, who entreated him to turn back, saying, "Your Majesty is on your way to prison".[1] However, these entreaties, mingled with those of Shahbaz, failed to shake Murad in his determination, and with his hand upon the hilt of his sword, he exclaimed: "None is braver than I".[1]

Arriving at the entrance to his brother's tent, a Kazi, who had always been loyal to him, whispered in the Prince's ear, "With your feet you have come",[1] which was meant to imply that he would depart as a prisoner, but Murad also left these words of caution unheeded, and, whilst his escort were surrounded by Aurangzeb's officers and conducted to that portion of the camp set aside for them, he, attended by Shahbaz only, strode into his brother's tent. He received a most cordial greeting from Aurangzeb, as well as from his son Mohammed Sultan and two of their highest officers, named respectively Shaikh Mir and Amir Khan. A splendid banquet had been prepared, and on this occasion Aurangzeb appeared to have discarded all his wonted austerity and to be bent upon giving his brother every possible proof of his loyal intentions. He led him to the place of honour, and, his face all wreathed in smiles, expressed his joy at being the host of his sovereign.

The banquet was followed by the appearance of some

[1] Manucci, *Storia do Mogor*, vol. i. p. 301.

beautiful dancing girls from Kashmir, who, gliding to and fro in the mazes of the nautch, flung roses and sprinkled perfumes amongst the guests.

Aurangzeb's low and insinuating voice never ceased pouring into his brother's ear descriptions of the glories to come, and all the time the attendant slaves filled and refilled his goblet with the potent wine of Shiraz. Under the influence of the strong beverage, the heavy perfume, and the rhythmic movement of the dancers, Murad began to feel drowsy, and Aurangzeb, pretending that his brother needed rest before the fatiguing ceremonies of the enthronement, withdrew from the banqueting-hall with a sign to all present to do likewise.

Murad remained, watched over solely by the loyal Shahbaz, whose growing uneasiness made him crouch at the Prince's feet, his hand on the hilt of his sword.

Almost immediately after the exit of Aurangzeb, the curtains leading to the inner tents occupied by the ladies of his harem parted, and the Prince, appearing at the aperture, beckoned to Shahbaz that he wished to speak to him. Shahbaz rose to his feet in obedience to the summons, and as he approached he felt his throat encircled by strong hands and, unable to say a single word, was dragged behind the curtains.

At the same moment a slave girl from the harem glided into the banqueting-tent, and kneeling down at Murad's feet, began to rub them gently in the manner common throughout the East, and under her soft touch the Prince, already in a state of stupor, sank into a deep sleep. With deft fingers the girl unbuckled his sword, and taking possession of that and of his dagger, carried both into the harem, leaving Murad completely defenceless and at the mercy of his enemies.

Imprisonment of Murad Bakhsh.

Shortly after midnight an elephant left the camp, bearing on its back a closed howdah, in which sat the hapless Prince, his ankles shackled with a pair of golden fetters, on his way to the state prison of Gwalior, which had so often housed kings whose dreams of glory were ended. The nobles who had attended Prince Murad Bakhsh on his way to the fateful banquet remained in ignorance of his doom throughout the night, Aurangzeb's officers taking care to keep them regally entertained ; and it was only at sunrise, when the cry of " Long live the Emperor Aurangzeb " rang through the camp, that they realised the treachery which had taken place.

For a brief space they contemplated resistance, in the hope of being able to rescue Prince Murad, but when informed by Aurangzeb's officers that he was beyond their reach and were urged by them to avoid needless bloodshed, they yielded and offered their allegiance to the traitor, an example which was quickly followed by the troops under their command.

Accession of Aurangzeb.

On July 21, 1658, Aurangzeb, who, immediately after the treacherous act perpetrated upon his brother, headed the combined armies towards Delhi, was, in the Shalimar Garden outside the walls of the city, proclaimed Emperor of India under the magnificent title of Alamgir, or Conqueror of the Universe. The means by which he achieved fulfilment of his ambitions are almost without a parallel for ruthlessness and hypocrisy in the history of any country, East or West.

Shah Jehan was a prisoner at Agra and Murad at Gwalior ; Aurangzeb did not fear his brother Shuja, but the hatred in his heart remained unsatisfied so long as Prince Dara retained his liberty, and his mind was now bent upon procuring the capture of the rightful heir to the throne at the earliest possible moment.

Wanderings of Dara Shekoh.

When Dara had fled from Agra, a prey to despair after his defeat at Samugarh, he had proceeded to Delhi, where, on the strength of the firman signed by his father, he was able to raise a force of 5000 men. With this small army he attempted to hold the line of the river Bias against a column sent in his pursuit by Aurangzeb, but failed, and eked out a perilous existence until, in November 1658, he crossed the Sind Desert and sought refuge in the island state of Kutch, the territory of the Jhareja Rajput clan. The Rao, attracted by the Prince's generous and frank personality, not only warmly welcomed him to Bhuj, his capital, but also made him an offer of alliance, and further strengthened the bonds of their friendship by the betrothal of his daughter to Sipihr Shekoh, Dara's youthful son.

After a short and peaceful sojourn at Bhuj, Dara crossed the Rann, the great Salt Marsh separating Kutch from the mainland of Kathiawar, and entered the neighbouring state of Nawanagar, whose ruler, the Jam, belonged likewise to the Jhareja clan, and received him with equal cordiality.

From Nawanagar Dara proceeded to Gujarat proper, and almost immediately afterwards, an event occurred which raised the very faint hopes he had allowed to revive in his heart with regard to the future to dazzling heights. The

Gujarat declares for Dara.

Viceroy at Ahmedabad, Shah Nawaz Khan, in spite of being the new Emperor's father-in-law, longed for an opportunity to revenge himself upon Aurangzeb, who had imprisoned him for seven months at the outbreak of the war of succession for refusing to join him against Shah Jehan, and unhesitatingly offered to Prince Dara his allegiance and that of the territory over which he ruled. The Prince accepted the viceroy's offer, but made it clear that he was acting not for himself but on behalf of his father, the deposed Emperor, Shah Jehan. January 9, 1659, saw the state entry into Ahmedabad of the erstwhile homeless fugitive, now suddenly transformed into the ruler of a great province.

Inspired by the generous ambition to free his father and once more to restore him to his lawful seat upon the throne, Dara lost no time in preparing for the struggle against the usurper.

When evolving in his mind the best means to carry his plan into execution, he recollected having, in the days of success, used all his influence with his father to save both Bijapur and Golconda from the wiles of Aurangzeb, and his first thought was to seek the alliance of the two Deccan states to help him to achieve his aim.

Unfortunately this scheme was delayed by the necessity which arose for Prince Dara to give his attention to fresh matters of importance. An envoy arrived from Maharaja Jaswant Singh of Marwar, who suggested to Dara to advance to Ajmere, and from there, uniting with him and his Rathors, to march to Agra and secure the release of the Emperor Shah Jehan.

The proclamation of Aurangzeb as Emperor had been followed by an offer of allegiance from Mirza-Raja Jai Singh of Amber, who also brought about the temporary submission of the Maharaja of Marwar.

A subsequent quarrel between Jaswant Singh of Marwar and Aurangzeb had been the cause of this change of attitude, but the Maharaja, though he had fought bravely for Shah Jehan on the field of Dharmat, did not possess the sterling qualities of loyalty so characteristic of his race, and was at heart an opportunist, bent on furthering his own interests. Aurangzeb was fully aware of this trait in Jaswant Singh's character, and, with wonted astuteness, exploited it by issuing a firman in reply to the Maharaja's decision to conclude an alliance with Dara, which appointed Jaswant Viceroy of Gujarat in place of Shah Nawaz, who had rebelled.

This proof of favour on the part of the new Emperor

brought about a complete change in the intentions of Jaswant, who, abandoning Dara to his fate, immediately renewed his allegiance to Aurangzeb.

Dara, ignorant of this treachery, advanced at the head of the troops which formed the provincial garrison of Gujarat, accompanied by Shah Nawaz Khan as far as the town of Merta in Marwar, whence he despatched a messenger to Jaswant announcing his arrival in Rathor territory, and urging the Maharaja to join him without delay. To this Jaswant sent the lying reply that he was only awaiting the arrival of his more distant vassals to join his banner, after which his combined forces would form a junction with those belonging to the Prince at Ajmere.

Dara, fully confident of the Maharaja's loyalty, continued his march to Ajmere, to find, on arrival at the gates of the city, that there was not a single Rathor clansman to greet him, and furthermore to receive the alarming intelligence, brought him by scouts, that a powerful imperial army, commanded by the Emperor in person, was rapidly approaching to the attack.

Battle of Deorai.

The Prince hastily retreated from the city and entrenched himself in the Pass of Deorai, four miles south of Ajmere, and it was here that for two entire days, from March 12 to 14, 1659, the rival armies fought their last desperate battle.

Shah Nawaz Khan fell on the field and all the soldiers of Dara's army put up a magnificent fight, but the resources of a great empire were in Aurangzeb's hands, and the heroic struggle ended in the complete defeat of Dara, who, entirely broken, fled towards Gujarat, pursued by a detachment of the imperial forces under the leadership of Mirza-Raja Jai Singh.

Defeat and flight of Dara Shekoh.

News of the disaster had preceded Dara at Ahmedabad, with the result that he found that all the officers whom he had left in charge had transferred their allegiance to his rival. An attempt to secure the assistance of his former ally, the Rao of Kutch, also proved unavailing, and Dara resigned himself to seeking refuge for the time being with Malik Jiwan, the Pathan chieftain of Dadar, in his fort, which was situated about nine miles from the Indian end of the Bolan Pass.

The unfortunate Prince had a great claim upon the friendship of this chieftain for, many years previous to these events, when fortune smiled upon Dara, Malik Jiwan had been sent to Shah Jehan's court a prisoner in chains under sentence of death for treason against the state.

The courageous bearing of the condemned man had so impressed the heir apparent that he had interceded with his father and had obtained a free pardon for the culprit and the restoration of his *jagir*.

Here again the bitterest disappointment awaited the Prince, who had yet to learn the depths of ingratitude to which human nature can sink. Malik Jiwan, whilst receiving Dara and his small following with kindly words and assuring him of his unalterable devotion, sent a swift messenger to Jai Singh, informing him that he would detain the prince at Dadar until a force could be despatched to arrest him.

Dara might possibly have suspected treachery had he not at the moment been distracted with grief at the death of his wife Nadira Begum, who succumbed to an attack of fever shortly after her arrival at Dadar. Although their marriage had originally been dictated for reasons of state, a deep and lasting affection had sprung up between them which had been put to the test by the Princess's following him into adversity ; and also she was the mother of his two sons. Her earthly remains were sent, under escort, to Lahore for burial at the shrine of the Saint Mian Mir.

It was not to be Dara's fate long to survive the loss he had sustained ; his own hour was close at hand.

Malik Jiwan's message to Jai Singh resulted in the arrival at the gates of Dadar of a body of Aurangzeb's cavalry, and this was the signal for the Pathan chief and some of his fierce clansmen to burst into the Prince's apartment and endeavour to seize him.

Dara's young son, Sipihr Shekoh, drawing his sword, made a gallant attempt to defend his father, but both he and the Prince were rapidly overpowered and sent, under escort of their betrayers and the Moghul cavalry, to Aurangzeb at Delhi.

In the course of its history the great city had witnessed many tragic events, but none so poignant as the procession which, on August 29, 1659, wended its way through the crowded streets, and of which Dara Shekoh, the legitimate heir to the proudest throne in Asia, was the central figure. Dara, a shawl and turban, both of the coarsest material, constituting his scanty clothing, his feet chained together, was seated on an undersized elephant covered with dirt, and as this sad spectacle became visible to the waiting crowds, the air was filled with curses on the head of the traitor Malik Jiwan, mingled with words of pity for the

hapless victim, and the stifled sobs of the women. Dara himself seemed to gaze in front of him with unseeing eyes until, as the procession neared the walls of the fort, a poor Musulman fakir, always stationed at that point, called out: "O Dara, when you were master you always gave me alms, to-day I know well thou hast nought to give me".[1] For a brief moment the old frank smile irradiated the Prince's worn face as, with a gesture of matchless and yet simple dignity, Dara divested himself of his coarse garment and flung it to the mendicant.

That same night, at a council which took place in the Diwan-i-Khas of the imperial palace, the fate to be meted out to the Prince was decided.

Murder of Dara Shekoh.

To the lasting honour of Danishmand Khan, a high Persian noble of the court and a personal enemy of Dara, be it said that he cast aside all former rancour and did his utmost to save his life, but his opponents were too many. The Moslem priests installed by Aurangzeb declared in favour of death for Dara, the infidel, and consequent enemy of the state; and their opinion was upheld to the utmost by the most relentless of all, Roshanara Begum, who rejoiced in the thought of the terrible grief which the death of her favourite brother would cause his gentle sister Jehanara. Aurangzeb needed little or no persuasion to give his sanction to this last terrible sentence, and an attempt made on the following day by the people of Delhi to avenge Dara by stoning to death the traitor Malik Jiwan, removed the last scruple from his mind.

Dara was fully resigned to his fate and during the final hours of his life, the leisure time of which had been so largely devoted to studying and comparing the great religions of the world, felt his whole soul drawn towards Christianity. With the words, "Mohammed kills me and the Son of God and Mary gives me life",[2] he begged to be allowed a visit from his friend, the Jesuit father Buzée. The unhappy Prince was refused this final consolation. At seven o'clock that evening the murderers, headed by a slave named Nazar Beg, who had on one occasion been punished by Dara for some offence, burst into the Prince's apartment and, throwing aside Sipihr Shekoh, who attempted to shield his father with his own body, promptly overpowered Dara, stabbing him to death with their daggers.

[1] Manucci, *Storia do Mogor*, vol. i. p. 355.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 357.

His head was carried in triumph to Aurangzeb as he sat in the garden of his palace, and the inhuman brother, treading this poor remnant of mortality under foot, exclaimed in sneering accents: "Behold the face of a would-be King and Emperor of all the Moghul realms; take him from my sight".[1]

The gallant young Sipihr Shekoh was sent to lifelong imprisonment on the Rock of Gwalior, and Aurangzeb's thirst for vengeance had found complete satisfaction.

In accordance with a custom existing amongst Mahommedans, by which a man was entitled to lay claim to the widows of a deceased brother, Aurangzeb now demanded from Shah Jehan the surrender of Udipuri Bai and Ra-na-dil, who had shared the Emperor's imprisonment during Dara's absence. Udipuri Bai, though endowed with great beauty, had been born to a life of slavery and, possessing only the stunted mentality of her class, offered no resistance to the change of masters. She became an inmate of Aurangzeb's harem and, in due course, the mother of his youngest and favourite son, Kam Bakhsh.

Ra-na-dil, in reply to the Emperor's demand, expressed the wish to know in what particular way she had aroused his desire. Aurangzeb took this somewhat mysterious answer to portend submission, and sent Ra-na-dil a message couched in the most flowery Oriental language to the effect that his heart had been caught in the silken net of her hair. A few days later one of her servants approached the imperial presence and, with a mocking salaam, threw a mass of dark luxuriant tresses at his feet. Angered, and yet stirred to even greater desire by Ra-na-dil's attitude, Aurangzeb despatched another messenger to her to say that it had really been the beauty of her face which had overwhelmed him, and suggesting to her, in a phrase, which under the circumstances could not be surpassed in callousness, that she should look upon him as though he were Dara.

On receipt of this message, Ra-na-dil called for a *katar*, the terrible triple-bladed dagger of the Deccan, and without faltering in her self-imposed mutilation, slashed her face until every trace of the beauty so beloved by Dara had been destroyed.

A blood-stained cloth was, a few hours later, handed to Aurangzeb with the following words written in Ra-na-dil's hand: "The beauty you have desired exists no longer, but

[1] Manucci, *Storia do Mogor*, vol. i. p. 359.

if my blood will gratify you, it is yours." [1] Awed into some kind of admiration and respect by this desperate act, and possibly feeling some regret for the cruelty which had driven her to it, Aurangzeb renounced all further claim to Ra-na-dil, the former nautch girl of Delhi, whose splendid heroism had proved her right to the title of Imperial Princess.

The tragic death of Dara Shekoh sounded the knell of the true glory of the house of Timur, for with this noble prince there perished all the great and beneficial changes which had distinguished it from the earlier Musulman dynasties.

The open condemnation of the heir apparent on the grounds of his sympathy for the Hindus and their faith had been the signal for the revival of all the old racial and sectarian hatreds dormant since the days of Akbar. The Moghul Empire reached the zenith of its greatness during the reign of Shah Jehan; with the accession of the son who had usurped the throne by the most treacherous and unscrupulous means, it slowly but surely moved towards its ultimate decline.

[1] See Manucci, *Storia do Mogor*, vol. i. p. 361.

CHAPTER V

THE GREAT PURITAN OF INDIA, A.D. 1659–1707

Movements of Prince Shuja.

THE ill-fated Dara Shekoh had constituted the most formidable stumbling-block in the path of Aurangzeb. Prince Murad languished, a prisoner, behind the massive ramparts of Gwalior, and of the usurper's brothers the only one left as a possible menace to his supremacy was Prince Shuja, who, until that moment Viceroy of Bengal, had, as mentioned in the previous chapter, upon the outbreak of the war of succession, proclaimed himself King at Raj Mahal. Acting in alliance with his brothers Murad and Aurangzeb, he placed himself at the head of the troops he disposed of in his capacity as viceroy, and, advancing northwards without encountering any resistance, occupied the sacred city of Benares.

On reaching Bahadurpur, situated five miles to the north-east, his contingent came upon the imperial army which had been despatched against them by the Emperor Shah Jehan and which was commanded, as will be recollected, by Prince Dara's eldest son, Prince Sulaiman Shekoh. Though still young in years, this prince was both a resourceful and determined soldier, and, on February 14, 1658, a year before the tragic events which brought our previous chapter to its conclusion, he inflicted a crushing defeat upon Shuja, who, with his army, was compelled to beat a hasty retreat to Bengal, where they entrenched themselves near the town of Mungir.

Sulaiman Shekoh, following up his victory, advanced rapidly in pursuit of his enemy until, at a point within fourteen miles of Mungir, intelligence was brought to him by his scouts that Shuja's position was a very strong one and

that any attempt to capture it by assault would be doomed to failure.

This information was closely followed by the news of the defeat of Jaswant Singh at Dharmat by the united armies of Murad and Aurangzeb, a disaster which brought about a complete change in the military and political situation in Bengal. It now became clear to Prince Shuja that he had hitherto been the dupe of his brothers, whose coalition he had joined in the honest belief that Dara was slowly poisoning the Emperor Shah Jehan, and that their advance upon Agra was undertaken only for the purpose of saving their father's life.

It was at this moment that Dara, seriously alarmed for the safety of the Emperor, sent a message to his son, Sulaiman Shekoh, urging him to endeavour at all costs to bring about a peaceful settlement with Shuja and thus gain freedom to march with his entire forces to the assistance of the main imperial army at Samugarh. The conclusion of peace with Shuja was an easy matter, as the Prince was now fully convinced of the innocence of Dara and the treacherous intentions of his other two brothers.

Flight of Sulaiman Shekoh.

The disaster of Samugarh, however, occurring just as Sulaiman Shekoh was preparing to join the imperial forces, reacted tragically upon his own army and brought about the desertion of his Chief of Staff, Mirza-Raja Jai Singh, and of the entire Rajput contingent serving under his banner, who joined the forces of Aurangzeb.

The Moslem officers and soldiers followed suit, and the unfortunate Prince found himself abandoned by all but seventeen followers, who, remaining faithful to him, assisted him in his flight to the hill state of Garhwal, which he reached in the month of August 1658, and where he claimed the protection of the Raja Prithvi Singh.

Prince Shuja, after concluding peace with Sulaiman Shekoh, remained in his fortified camp at Mungir with his army and assumed for the time being an attitude of neutrality towards his brothers Murad and Aurangzeb.

The latter, almost immediately after usurping the throne, sent a friendly letter to Shuja, confirming him in the government of Bengal and adding to it the province of Bihar, so frequently united under one ruler.

War between Shuja and Aurangzeb.

With the fate of his two brothers ever present in his mind, Shuja was not for one moment deceived by the Emperor's offer and in reply issued a proclamation in which he openly avowed his intention to lead his troops against

Aurangzeb, set Shah Jehan free and restore him to his rightful throne.

Battle of Khajuha.

This proclamation was immediately put into execution and the Prince and his army advanced northwards as far as the small town of Khajuha in Oudh, where, on January 5, 1659, they came into contact with the imperial troops under the personal command of the Emperor.

The battle which ensued ended in a complete defeat for Shuja, who was once again obliged to retreat to Mungir, where he hoped to gather reinforcements. Aurangzeb, however, realising his brother's intentions, was determined not to allow him sufficient time to carry them out and another imperial army, commanded by the Emperor's eldest son, Mohammed Sultan, was promptly despatched with orders to conquer Bengal. The Chief of Staff attached to the young Prince was no less a person than Mir Jumla, now released from his mock imprisonment at Daulatabad, with the proud titles of Khan Khanan and Yar-i-Wafadar (Faithful Friend) conferred upon him in grateful recognition of his services by his imperial master.

The commencement of the campaign brought success to Mohammed Sultan's army, and Shuja and his troops were forced to evacuate both Mungir and Raj Mahal and to retreat to Tanda, in the vicinity of the old Bengal capital of Gaur.

At the very moment when victory seemed assured, Aurangzeb found himself threatened by unlooked-for danger arising from the cynicism which had throughout his life caused him to play upon the baser side of human nature, whilst denying the very existence of the nobler instincts to which his own character was entirely foreign. Aurangzeb was incapable both of gaining and of comprehending the loyalty of a man or the love of a woman in their purest and highest sense. Between him and his adherents, even the most faithful amongst them, there could never be that whole-hearted trust which had bound Abul Fazl to Akbar and had given to Shah Jehan the devoted love of Mumtaz Mahal and her cheerful sharing until her death of all the vicissitudes of his career. Distrust formed indeed the keynote of his character, and his outlook on life cannot be better illustrated than by quoting the following words once spoken by him to his second son, Mohammed Muazzam: "The art of reigning is so delicate that a king's jealousy should be awakened by his very shadow".[1]

[1] Bernier's *Travels in the Moghul Empire*, p. 84.

Whilst conferring the command of the expedition to Bengal upon Mohammed Sultan, the Emperor, for fear lest his son might become too popular with the imperial troops and possibly attempt to usurp the throne, sought to obviate any such danger by investing Mir Jumla, the Prince's Chief of Staff, with equal powers.

Mohammed Sultan, who had quite recently led a division of the imperial army with great skill in the struggle at Khajuha, and who, not unnaturally, had pictured his formal entry into Delhi covered with glory as the conqueror of Bengal, was greatly angered to discover that, by appointing Mir Jumla as chief of his staff and actually as a check on his authority, the Emperor had reduced his powers to those of a mere cipher. His popularity with the troops was not of much avail for the simple reason that the older officers, composed mostly of veterans of Aurangzeb's Deccan wars, regarded Mir Jumla as their real commander.

Intrigue of Shuja with Prince Mohammed.

This state of affairs promptly became known to Shuja through the agency of his spies, and gave him the longed-for opportunity of revenge against Aurangzeb by fighting him with his own weapons.

For purposes of his own, Aurangzeb had, it will be remembered, betrothed Mohammed Sultan at a very early age to Shuja's infant daughter Gulrukh Banu ; the marriage had, however, owing to the outbreak of the war of succession, never been solemnised.

The young Princess had meanwhile reached the age of maidenhood and had blossomed into great beauty, and Shuja now sought to lure Mohammed Sultan to his side by recalling to his mind his early betrothal to his daughter. At her father's suggestion, Gulrukh Banu indited a letter to him expressing her grief at the feud between their parents which had been the cause of their parting. She added that Shuja, far from entertaining any personal feelings of enmity against him, would welcome him as an ally, and finally made it clear to the young Prince that she was prepared to bestow her hand upon him in marriage if he would become an adherent to her father's cause.

This letter, which one of Shuja's agents succeeded in getting through to Mohammed Sultan's camp, was well timed. Deep resentment against his father for the slight he had put upon him, mingled with the gentler thought of winning a beautiful bride, combined to make Mohammed Sultan cast aside any lingering shred of hesitation. Under cover of night and attended only by a few trusted officers,

he fled to Shuja's camp, where his uncle welcomed him most cordially and where his marriage to Gulrukh Banu was immediately solemnised.

Although his command of the imperial army had been restricted, the effect of Mohammed Sultan's desertion was at first very injurious to the morale, especially of those troops which had been under his personal leadership, and even Mir Jumla's efforts to restore their confidence proved unavailing ; so much so that, taking advantage of the confusion to assume the offensive, Shuja's forces succeeded in recapturing Raj Mahal.

In the grave predicament which threatened Aurangzeb's new possessions in Bengal, he once again took recourse to discreditable means to retrieve the situation. He wrote a letter to his son purporting to be the reply to one (wholly imaginary) from Mohammed Sultan, in which he made it appear that the young Prince had expressed his deep regret for yielding to a momentary impulse and deserting from the Emperor's banner, and that he had offered to earn his father's forgiveness by instigating a conspiracy against Shuja ; Aurangzeb in his reply to this fictitious document accorded his full pardon to Mohammed Sultan, and urged him to lose no time in carrying out the plot.

By a cunning device this letter found its way into Shuja's hands and resulted in his sending a peremptory summons to his son-in-law, whom he openly accused of the blackest treachery. All protestations on the part of Mohammed Sultan as to his complete ignorance of any conspiracy were unavailing. He was ordered to quit the camp instantly, and, accompanied by his young wife, he returned to the imperial headquarters, a faint hope in his heart of effecting a reconciliation with his father.

Vengeance of Aurangzeb on Mohammed Sultan.

Aurangzeb, however, knew no mercy in dealing with an opponent, not even with one of his own flesh and blood. Mir Jumla, acting upon imperial orders, placed the hapless Prince under arrest and despatched him to Gwalior, where he remained a prisoner in the rock-hewn dungeons of the great fortress until two years before his death, which event occurred in 1676.

Defeat and fate of Prince Shuja.

Mir Jumla, his army greatly reinforced, took the offensive against Shuja, and on April 5, 1660, inflicted a crushing defeat upon the Prince and his forces at Maksudabad near the town of Malda. Deserted by all save his family and a few devoted servants, Prince Shuja fled to Dacca, the capital of Eastern Bengal, and thence to Chittagong, the Indian headquarters

of the piratical Maghs of Arakan, the most terrible scourges ever inflicted upon the inhabitants of that part of India.

The Maghs or Arakanese, of Burmese extraction and therefore expert sailors, were familiar with every creek and backwater of Eastern Bengal, and counted also amongst their allies bands of renegade Portuguese recruited from criminals, military and naval deserters, and unfrocked monks from the monasteries of Goa, all of whom had for many years found refuge in the town of Chittagong, and whose great gifts of seamanship made their support of the utmost value to the Arakanese King. Forsaken by all, it was with a people of such low standing that the unhappy Shuja now found himself compelled to seek support. Sandathudamma, the reigning King of Arakan, whilst thirsting for the rich spoil of Bengal, was far too cautious to involve himself in the conflict between Aurangzeb and his brother, and categorically refused the Moghul Prince's proposal for an offensive and defensive alliance against the Emperor. All he promised to do was to extend to Shuja his fullest protection, should he seek refuge in Arakan.

The Prince, bereft of his last hope of retrieving his fallen fortunes, accepted this offer, and on May 12, 1660, sailed on an Arakanese war-vessel for Mrohaung, Sandathudamma's capital, accompanied only by a very small band of devoted followers and by his two unmarried daughters, the elder of whom was destined to be the innocent cause of her father's doom.

On arrival in the city, Shuja was treated as an honoured guest, but, shortly after taking up his residence at Mrohaung, the true meaning of the King of Arakan's friendliness was made known to him in the shape of a request from Sandathudamma which, though courteously worded, amounted almost to a command—that the Prince should bestow upon him the hand of his eldest daughter in marriage. Even in his desperate plight Shuja's whole soul recoiled at the thought that his child, in whose veins flowed the proud blood of Timur, should wed one whom he regarded as a barbarian and idolater.[1] It had come to his knowledge that a colony of Indian Musulman merchants had established themselves in Mrohaung, and he conceived the wild plan of trying to enlist their assistance to overthrow the King of Arakan and his house, and to found a Moghul kingdom, of which he himself would become sovereign.

[1] The Arakanese, like all branches of the Burmese race, were Buddhists.

The Musulman merchants, who, in spite of their peaceful avocations, were, like so many of their class, trained to wield the sword if necessity should arise, unhesitatingly entered into the conspiracy, but, by a cruel stroke of fate, before it had fully matured, rumours of the plot reached Sandathudamma's ears, and the result was disastrous. Shuja's residence was immediately surrounded by Arakanese troops, and although he and his followers put up a magnificent resistance, they were finally overpowered, the Prince himself being slain in the fight. His head was severed from his body and taken in triumph on a pike to the King of Arakan, whose further thirst for revenge was visited upon the two unhappy princesses, who were condemned to spend the remainder of their lives as virtual slaves in his zenana.

End of Murad Bakhsh.

The tragic career of Shuja's brother Murad Bakhsh was now also drawing to a close. Though never a man of outstanding merit, Murad had, by reason of his personal courage and generosity, enjoyed considerable popularity, especially with the army and the poor of the community. Even when a prisoner in the fortress of Gwalior, he tried to alleviate distress, and, on one occasion, having heard of some Musulman fakirs in the city who subsisted entirely on the charity of the pious, he unhesitatingly set aside half of the very modest allowance paid to him as a prisoner of state for their support.

This generous action so greatly touched the recipients that they made an attempt, in which they succeeded, to enter into secret communication with the Prince in the hope of bringing about his escape. A rope ladder was smuggled into Murad's apartments, with instructions to him under cover of night to descend the mighty rock by this perilous means, where, if successful, he would find a swift-footed horse in readiness to convey him to a place of safety.

When sent to Gwalior, the Prince's favourite slave girl, a beautiful Hindu dancer named Saraswati Bai, who loved him passionately, had been allowed to share his captivity. Murad knew that it would be impossible for any woman, be she ever so fearless, to descend the perpendicular slope of the great rock, but could not reconcile himself to leaving Saraswati Bai without a word of farewell. On the date appointed for his escape, shortly before the hour of midnight, he made his way to her apartment and gently broke to her the news of his impending bid for liberty, but at the moment of parting the girl was unable to control her sobs, the sound of which reached the ears of Murad's gaolers and caused

them to burst into the room. The rope ladder, by means of which Murad hoped to regain his liberty, betrayed him to his guards, with the result that he was even more closely watched than hitherto and subjected to still harder conditions of imprisonment.

He might possibly have been allowed to linger on a prisoner until released by a natural death, had not Aurangzeb's fears been aroused by the fact, revealed in his attempt to regain his freedom, that Murad could still count upon friends who would be ready to assist him. This fact sealed his doom. The Emperor, never at a loss how to accomplish his sinister designs, instigated the son of Ali Naki,[1] Murad's former Diwan in Gujarat, who had there suffered the death penalty, to charge the Prince with the murder of his father. The accusation was followed by a mock trial before the Kazi of Gwalior, the result of which was a foregone conclusion.

Murad Bakhsh was sentenced to death, and on December 4, 1661, was beheaded and, as a final indignity, buried in the Traitors' Cemetery reserved for state prisoners within the walls of the fortress.

Thus, by slow degrees but with unrelenting pertinacity, those members of the imperial house who might possibly constitute a danger to Aurangzeb's supremacy were swept from his path and there now remained only the gallant young Sulaiman Shekoh, eldest son of the ill-fated Dara.

Fate of Sulaiman Shekoh.

This young Prince had, until December 1660, remained in enjoyment of his freedom under the protection of Raja Prithvi Singh of Garhwal, who, a true Rajput, would never, under any circumstances, agree to the betrayal of a guest. The Raja, however, had reached a great age and had been obliged to make over the real power in the state to his son, Medini Singh, a man cast in a very different mould.

Aurangzeb, aware of the fact that the aged Raja had abdicated in all but name, sent a peremptory demand, through the agency of Mirza-Raja Jai Singh of Amber, for the surrender of Sulaiman Shekoh, threatening, in the event of a refusal, forthwith to despatch an army to invade Garhwal.

Medini Singh, the unworthy scion of a noble race, cowed into submission by these threats, brushed aside his aged father's generous protests, and, after a brave resistance on the part of Sulaiman Shekoh, delivered him into the hands of an imperial force commanded by Kumar Ram Singh of Amber, heir of the Mirza-Raja.

[1] See p. 436.

On January 5, 1661, the eldest son of Dara Shekoh, gallant in his bearing, though almost staggering beneath the weight of his chains, was led by his captors into the beautiful Diwan-i-Khas of the Delhi Palace, where the Emperor, the man guilty of the death of the young Prince's father, sat in state. Many of the nobles in attendance upon Aurangzeb were moved to tears by the dignity and courage of Sulaiman Shekoh's demeanour ; not so the Emperor himself. In cold and unemotional terms he quickly pronounced sentence upon his nephew—imprisonment for life in the fortress of Gwalior.

Amongst the specially degrading punishments meted out to many prisoners was one which consisted in their being compelled to drink an infusion of crushed poppy heads, known as the " poust ", which gradually reduced its victims to a state of torpor, leading finally to imbecility.

A true Moslem, Sulaiman manfully accepted his fate of lifelong imprisonment as the decree of Allah, his only request to the Emperor being that he should be spared this loathsome beverage. Aurangzeb, in the presence of his entire court, took a solemn oath to respect his nephew's wishes in this one point, but even this promise was not binding to the Emperor, who was dead both to honour and to pity when dealing with the son of Dara Shekoh. No sooner had the Prince been immured in the prison of the fortress than the fatal drug was slowly and persistently administered to him, resulting in that gradual and terrible death in life which he had so dreaded.

Eventually in the month of May 1662, two of his guards, unable any longer to endure the sight of Sulaiman Shekoh's sufferings, yielded to his entreaties and meted out a swift release to him with their swords.

Death of Shah Jehan.

The death of Sulaiman Shekoh brought to an end the calamitous period of the Moghul war of succession, but the most tragic figure still survived in the person of the aged Emperor, Shah Jehan. Confined within the walls of his gilded prison in Agra, the deposed sovereign, denied even the solace of pen and paper in case he should make use of them to communicate with his partisans outside, derived his only comfort from the never-failing devotion of his daughter Jehanara, who continued to tend him with the most loving care.

Grief-stricken at the cruel fate suffered by Dara, Shuja and the brave young Sulaiman, Shah Jehan, having obtained permission to write to Aurangzeb, couched his letter in

terms of bitterest reproach, to which he received the reply, all the more brutal because not wholly unjustified :

> How do you still regard the memory of your brothers Khusru and Parviz, whom you did to death before your accession, and who had threatened no injury to you ? [1]

Early in January of the year 1666 it became evident to his surroundings that Shah Jehan's physical powers were beginning to wane. The fallen Emperor himself longed for death, and Jehanara, realising that the end was fast approaching, could not bear the thought that her father's soul should quit its earthly tenement filled with bitter hatred against his only surviving son. Yielding to his daughter's entreaties when all others would have failed, Shah Jehan, the shades of death almost upon him, sent a written message to Aurangzeb, assuring him of his forgiveness for all his crimes.

On the night of January 22, 1666, the end came. In the presence of Jehanara and the little band of faithful slaves who had elected to share their unhappy sovereign's adversity, Shah Jehan, in a weak voice but with unclouded mind, thanked his servants for their loyalty, and solemnly blessed his daughter. With the words of the Mohammedan creed on his lips, his eyes, gazing through the open casement, sought the farther bank of the Jumna where stood the matchless shrine of his only love, white and stainless in the moonlight. Then with a smile, born of the hope of reunion, the last truly great Moghul passed from this earthly sphere.

Shah Jehan had, in the days of his power, intended to erect on the opposite bank of the Jumna an exact replica of the Taj in black marble, destined in due course to receive his own earthly remains, and to connect the two shrines by a bridge of silver. The wars of succession prevented the execution of this great idea, but Jehanara, anxious as far as possible to carry out her father's wishes, arranged that he should be laid to rest beside Mumtaz Mahal in the building sanctified by their love, which has rendered it immortal.

Policy of Aurangzeb.

The dying Emperor's pardon had substantially strengthened Aurangzeb's position on the throne ; the Musulman

[1] Jadunath Sarkar, *History of Aurangzib*, vol. iii. chap. xxx. pp. 135 and 136.

This taunt, in the case of Parviz, was almost certainly unfounded, for this prince died a natural death, the result probably of his habitual intemperance.

grandees and officials of the empire accepted his rule without cavil, and the Rajput feudatory princes, though they would most probably have preferred a monarch of Dara Shekoh's type, unreservedly acknowledged the suzerainty of Aurangzeb. Strange to say, the only real danger threatening the new Emperor sprang from the anomalous and contradictory traits in his own character which, in due course, were bound to bring about discontent in his vast empire and to undermine his authority. Dara Shekoh had formed a correct estimate of his brother when sarcastically naming him the "Prayer-Monger". This man, unscrupulous and without mercy, as he proved on almost every occasion, was yet at heart a religious bigot and puritan. Aurangzeb's faith was the only genuine quality he possessed, but it was a cold, comfortless faith shorn of all that could have made it poetic and beautiful.

Shah Jehan throughout his reign had been a patron of the arts; painters, architects, poets and musicians were made welcome at his court. The liberal school of Islamic thought, founded under the auspices of the great Akbar, attained its fullest development under his grandson's rule. Great encouragement was given to the art of painting, which had long flourished at the Hindu courts of Rajputana, and which was now introduced at the imperial court, bringing in its train the famous miniature painters of Delhi, some of whose exquisite handiwork is still admired.

Aurangzeb's accession brought about a great change, for to his puritanical mind painting savoured of the idolatry forbidden by the Prophet; poetry served no useful purpose, and music was an object of detestation, as he looked upon it in the light of an immoral gratification of the senses. By imperial command the frescoes on the walls of certain of the palace pavilions, both at Delhi and at Agra, had to be destroyed, and Aurangzeb ordered that the statues erected by Akbar at Agra to commemorate his brave Rajput foes, Jai Mal and Patta, should be razed to the ground.

These measures were followed by the issue of a decree indiscriminately forbidding music or singing throughout the empire, but in face of this order the musicians of Delhi, who, like the European court jesters of the Middle Ages, were a privileged class, determined upon an original manner of protest. As Aurangzeb, on the Friday following upon this decree, was proceeding in state to the mosque, he found his path blocked by a funeral procession of great length. Addressing its leader, the Emperor inquired who it was who

was being followed to the grave by such a vast company, to which he received the following reply :

" May it please your Majesty, it is the corpse of Music, slain by your Majesty's command."

" Let her be buried deep ", was the uncompromising answer of the Emperor as he moved on to his devotions.[1]

In spite of the imperial edict, music and the fine arts continued to flourish in secret. Aurangzeb's fanaticism, however, increased with each year of his reign, threatening eventually to strike at the very heart of the empire's greatness. The sovereign looked upon the Hindus as idolaters, considering them consequently on a lower plane than that of the True Believers. It is needless to stress the danger of such a point of view coming from the head of an empire, the main strength of which lay in the loyalty of the great Hindu princes of Rajputana.

Conquest of Assam and of Chittagong.

In the very early years of Aurangzeb's rule, he did not allow these dangerous opinions to become generally known, and his empire seemed absolutely secure, and had even extended its boundaries. In 1663 an imperial army, commanded by Mir Jumla, had carried out the subjugation of the wild kingdom of Assam, ruled over by the Ahom tribe, a branch of the Shan race which had adopted the Hindu religion. The victory, however, was greatly marred by the death of the commander, who succumbed to an attack of fever on the return march through Bengal.[2]

This campaign was followed in 1666 by the wresting of Chittagong from the Maghs of Arakan. The imperial army on this occasion was led by the Emperor's maternal uncle, Shaista Khan, who had succeeded in bribing the Feringhee [3] pirates to desert to the Moghul banner from the service of the Arakanese King.

State of the Deccan. Progress of Sivaji Bhonsle.

Naturally, two brilliant successes following so closely upon one another greatly enhanced the glamour of Aurangzeb's reign. One portion of the empire alone, the Mahratta country of the Moghul Deccan, was not settling down under the new imperial rule. The Mahratta chief, Sivaji Bhonsle, son of Shahaji, had remained true to the solemn vow, taken

[1] Manucci, *Storia do Mogor*, vol. ii. p. 8.

[2] The ingrained suspicion and cynicism of Aurangzeb's nature can find no better illustration than the words of condolence he addressed to Mohammed Amin Khan on the death of his father, Mir Jumla : " You mourn the death of an affectionate parent, and I the loss of the most powerful and most dangerous of my friends ".—Bernier's *Travels in the Moghul Empire*, p. 173.

[3] The Portuguese renegades before mentioned.

when he was but a boy of sixteen, to free his country from the Moghul. He always carried on his person a small seal engraved, by his instructions, with the following significant inscription : " Although the first Moon is small, men see that it will grow gradually. This seal befits Sivaji, the son of Shahaji."[1] These words embodied his aims and constituted his motto in life.

Slowly but surely, during the ensuing years, bringing endless patience to the task, employing force when necessary, but frequently having recourse to diplomacy, Sivaji, endowed with that personal magnetism which made him safe in the loyalty of his followers, approached the longed-for goal.

All attempts by the Adil Shahis of Bijapur and of the Moghuls to capture his person had been in vain, in fact had resulted disastrously for them. As far back as 1660 Aurangzeb had despatched an army under the command of Shaista Khan against Sivaji, and on this occasion the Moghul general had succeeded in occupying the Mahratta leader's principal fief, the town of Poona. Sivaji, quite unperturbed, retired to the hill fortress of Singhgarh to await events ; and Shaista Khan, who completely underrated his enemy's character, sent the Mahratta leader a Persian poem which taunted him with hiding in the forests like a monkey. To this Sivaji replied : " O Khan, I am in truth Hanuman, the King of Monkeys, and I will destroy you as Hanuman aided Rama to destroy Ravana ".[2]

The Moghul commander, ignoring what he looked upon as an idle boast, took up his abode in Sivaji's private residence in Poona with the intention of remaining there until the fast of Ramazan, a period of enforced rest, had gone by.

One night during this period, the town of Poona was entered by a body of 400 men wearing infantry uniforms of the imperial army and apparently headed by three Moghul officers. In point of fact they were picked soldiers of the Mahratta forces and their leaders consisted of Yesaji Kank, Tanaji Malusre and of no less a person than Sivaji himself. At dawn the residence of the Khan was surrounded and, led by Sivaji, the Mahrattas forced an entry through a postern gate which led into the zenana. Shaista Khan, suddenly awakened from his slumbers by the cry of " Har ! Har !

[1] Kincaid and Parasnis, *A History of the Maratha People*, vol. i. chap. xiv. p. 133.

[2] *Ibid.* chap. xviii. p. 197.

Mahadeo!" was barely able to grasp his sword when his foes rounded upon him, and but for the presence of mind and courage of one of his slave girls, who promptly extinguished the only lamp in the sleeping chamber, thus giving him the chance to escape in the darkness, the Moghul commander would have paid for this adventure with his life. In spite of the fact that the arrival of imperial reinforcements obliged the daring raiders to disperse, this cleverly planned attempt by Sivaji had dealt a severe blow to the morale of the Moghul army and to the prestige of the empire.

The Mahratta chief in the year 1664 carried out a successful raid on the great port of Surat in Gujarat, known as the richest coast town in India, and retired afterwards carrying with him an immense booty in gold, silver and precious stones.

Incensed by Sivaji's repeated acts of defiance and the success which they brought him, Aurangzeb decided upon a campaign on a bigger scale, which was finally to crush him. In the following year, 1665, he recalled Shaista Khan and, entrusting the command to Jai Singh of Amber, despatched a great army to the Deccan. The Emperor, in making this selection, had acted wisely, for the Mirza-Raja was one of the ablest men of his day. In common with most Rajputs, he was a fine soldier, besides possessing great gifts as an administrator and a diplomatist. His full grasp of the Persian, Urdu and Turki languages made him popular both with the Musulman and Hindu elements at court and in the army; also, being a Hindu himself, Jai Singh could form a far more correct estimate of Sivaji's mentality than could possibly be expected of a Musulman noble of the type of Shaista Khan.

Siege of Purandar.

On arrival in the Deccan, the Mirza-Raja decided to concentrate upon the fortress of Purandar, situated six miles south of the town of Saswad, the main bulwark of Sivaji's strength and hitherto considered impregnable. Jai Singh, however, had brought with him a formidable train of siege artillery under the command of the great expert Niccolao Manucci, and immediately gave orders for a close investment.

The Mahrattas, as always, displayed great gallantry in their defence and, by constant sorties, night attacks and setting fire to the surrounding jungles, managed for a considerable time to harass and keep their foes at bay. Gradually, however, the pitiless fire of the Moghul guns succeeded in its work of destruction, and on June 11, 1665,

after a siege lasting two months, the outer fortifications of Purandar were carried by storm.

Sivaji, who, having realised the hopelessness of the situation for some time previous to this event, had sent an envoy to the imperial commander with tentative suggestions for a basis of negotiations, appeared himself, on the day of the fall of Purandar, in the Moghul camp, under a guarantee of safety from Jai Singh.

The Mirza-Raja, himself a patriotic Hindu and therefore attracted by the personality and gallant exploits of Sivaji, was also a loyal servant of the house of Timur, and aimed above all else at a reconciliation between the Mahratta leader, the Mahratta people and the Moghul Empire.

Sivaji was received at the camp with the highest honours, and a private conversation between the two leaders, carried on far into the night, concluded with an agreement known as the Treaty of Purandar, by which Sivaji ceded twenty-one of his forts to the Emperor and retained twelve ; and in return for these concessions was formally confirmed by the imperial government in his title of Raja and henceforth embodied in the ranks of the great feudatories of the empire. By tactful handling, Jai Singh succeeded in persuading Sivaji, in due course, to tender his personal allegiance to the Emperor.

Sivaji at Agra.

Before making the final arrangements for his departure, the Mahratta prince appointed his mother, Jijabai, regent over his *jagir*, and eventually, in the month of March 1666, accompanied by his six-year-old son Sambhaji, ten of his principal officers and a small escort of Mahratta cavalry, Sivaji set out for Agra, where the court was, at that moment, in residence. He reached the imperial city on May 9, and was greeted on arrival by Jai Singh's heir, Kumar Ram Singh, who represented his father at the Moghul court.

Three days later, on May 12, the Emperor, clad in his robes of state, and surrounded by the great *Mansabdars* and all the Rajput feudatories at that moment in Agra, received the Mahratta leader in public audience in the Diwan-i-Am. Aurangzeb was seated upon the throne, the great *Mansabdars* and Rajput feudatories occupying the places in his immediate vicinity, whilst below these nobles and vassals of the first rank, those of minor grades were ranged according to the order of precedence to which they were entitled. In the background of the huge hall of audience the ladies of the imperial harem gazed upon the magnificent scene from behind lattices of fretted marble, their interest being especi-

ally aroused by the expected presence of the famous chief, who had so long and so proudly maintained his independence against the mighty Moghul Empire.

Amongst these, the most eager of all, was the youthful Princess Zinat-un-Nisa, Aurangzeb's second daughter, who, as Sivaji, escorted by Kumar Ram Singh, entered the Diwan-i-Am, pressed as closely as possible to the marble grille so as not to miss one line of the face, nor one movement of the slight but dignified figure advancing to the Emperor's throne. Sivaji, ignorant of the existence of his fair watcher, passed on his way, but the Princess's romantic heart was stirred to its depths by his chivalrous bearing, and though they were never destined to meet, this youthful hero-worship remained a permanent influence in Zinat-un-Nisa's life and caused her, in future years, to play a very vital part in the history of the Mahratta people.

Aurangzeb, in this instance as in most crucial moments of his reign, proved false to his undertakings. He was incapable of understanding the great struggle which had raged in the proud Mahratta's breast before he could bring himself to bend the knee to the enemy of his race. As Sivaji approached the throne, the Emperor, with apparent grace, called out: "Come up, Sivaji Raja,"[1] but no sooner had the Mahratta chieftain salaamed and made the offering of gold customary on these occasions, than Aurangzeb, without showing any further interest or warmth of feeling, gave the signal to the court officials to lead the newly made prince to his allotted place in durbar.

Sivaji, who had every right to believe that this place would be amongst the great Hindu vassals of the throne, such as the heir apparent of Mewar and Jaswant Singh of Marwar, now found himself directed to where stood the ranks of the third-grade nobles, his actual place being behind a chieftain named Rai Singh Sesodia, who, though by birth a scion of the royal house of Mewar, was in point of fact merely a subordinate officer of Jai Singh; and he thus realised too late that, in summoning him to court as it would seem to bestow great honour upon him, the Emperor had really only desired his public humiliation. The ardent hope, which Jai Singh, as a true and patriotic statesman, had at heart when concluding the Treaty of Purandar that it would lead to the formation of a strong Mahratta state ruled over by Sivaji as a loyal vassal of the empire, a state which should

[1] Jadunath Sarkar, *Shivaji and his Times*, chap. vi. p. 157.

in due course become a valuable counterpoise to the kingdoms of Bijapur and Golconda, and playing the same part in Western India as the Rajput states played in the North, had thus been frustrated. The Emperor's plans ran in different channels. His bigotry and narrowness of outlook did not permit him to see Sivaji's greatness, nor to realise the immense influence which the Mahratta leader exercised over the minds of the people who derived their inspiration from him.

To Aurangzeb, Sivaji was the hated champion of the Hindu race in its struggle against Musulman oppression; and he rejoiced when hearing him called "The Mountain Rat", a name contemptuously bestowed upon him by the Emperor's Moghul courtiers. Sivaji's anger and mortification at the public insult were so great that, according to contemporary historians, he fainted in the Hall of Audience.

No sooner had he returned to the residence he occupied at Agra, than he despatched a violent protest to the Emperor in which he gave full utterance to his outraged feelings, but, far from bringing about an improvement in the situation, this very natural behaviour on Sivaji's part strengthened his sovereign's hands.

Declaring the Mahratta leader to be at heart a rebel still, Aurangzeb commanded Ram Singh to place him under arrest and to remove him as a prisoner to the local residence of the Amber princes outside the walls of Agra. The Emperor would have unhesitatingly put Sivaji to death had it not been that he feared a breach with his powerful vassal, Jai Singh, who had solemnly guaranteed the safety of the Mahratta chief. Suspecting Jai Singh of strong feelings of sympathy for his prisoner, the Emperor gave orders that the Amber palace should be surrounded by a force of Moghul soldiers, strengthened by artillery.

Escape of Sivaji from Agra.

Having succeeded in modifying the Emperor's suspicion by sending him messages in which he appeared to accept his fate in a spirit of humility, Sivaji obtained permission for most of his officers who had followed him to the North to return to their homes in the Deccan, begging to be allowed to retain with him only Hiroji Farzand, an illegitimate son of Shahaji, who bore a very strong resemblance to his half-brother.

During four months Sivaji endured this imprisonment, but all this time his mind had been busy with schemes to regain his liberty, and gradually, by his resourcefulness and

total disregard of danger, devised a plan for escape which, in its mingling of audacity and ingenuity, has seldom, if ever, found its equal in the history of any country.

He caused the announcement to be made early in the month of August that he had been stricken with severe illness, a violent fever, and that, being an orthodox Hindu, he desired the prayers of the learned Brahmins resident in Agra to be offered up for his recovery.

It was customary, when asking for their prayers, to send to each of these pandits large baskets containing offerings of sweetmeats. At first, when these large baskets left the precincts of the Amber residence, Sivaji's guards were suspicious and insisted on a close inspection of their contents, but after a time, finding them really filled with sweetmeats only, they were lulled into a sense of security.

On August 19 two baskets passed the Moghul sentinels without attracting their notice in any special way, and were borne with swiftness to a secluded spot some distance away. Suddenly the covers were raised and a human figure emerged from each. One was Sivaji, the other his young son Sambhaji. With considerable haste they made their way to a village some six miles from Agra, where they were met by Niraji Ravji, one of Sivaji's trusted Brahmin officials, and by two Mahratta officers named respectively Datta Trimbak and Raghumitra.

At this point the fugitives adopted the disguise of *Bairagis*, religious mendicants worshipping Krishna, in the just belief that the ashes with which these ascetics covered their bodies would make discovery of their identity practically impossible. The little party, equipped with begging-bowl and staff, started on their long homeward march, and, in the meantime, Hiroji Farzand, half-brother of the Mahratta chief, clad in Sivaji's clothes and wearing his signet ring, lay on his fictitious bed of sickness in Jai Singh's mansion at Agra. For twenty-four hours approximately Hiroji continued this impersonation of his brother, after which he rose, and putting on his own garments, approached the guards at the gates of the mansion. To their queries he replied that he, like Sivaji's other officers, had permission to return to the Deccan, adding boldly, "Make less noise; Sivaji is ill and under treatment".[1]

Not long after Hiroji's departure, the suspicions of the soldiers on guard became aroused by the unnatural stillness of the mansion and, entering it, they found to their intense

[1] Jadunath Sarkar, *Shivaji and his Times*, chap. vi. p. 167.

consternation that their prisoner had flown and that every room was deserted.

Aurangzeb's fury was boundless when intelligence of the clever ruse by which his prisoner had regained his liberty reached him, and he instantly commanded that every direct route to the Deccan should be closely watched.

Sivaji had foreseen this order when making his calculations and had arranged to evade the danger by making a pilgrimage, which, as he informed his comrades, had been his intention for some time past, to the holy shrines of Mathura, Benares and Orissa, before returning to the Deccan via Golconda.

Fearing that the long and fatiguing march by way of Golconda would prove too severe a tax upon the strength of his young son Sambhaji, Sivaji placed the child at Mathura under the care of three Deccani Brahmins, residents of the holy city, whose names were Krishnaji, Visaji and Kashi Trimbak, with instructions to carry him in safety by the quickest route to Raigarh, protecting him, should necessity arise, at the risk of their own lives. The Brahmins nobly fulfilled this task and in due course delivered the young prince to his father safe and sound. Sivaji, in gratitude for their loyalty, conferred upon each of them the title of *Visvas Rao* or Lord of Fidelity.

Thus, whilst all direct routes to the Deccan were being closely patrolled by Moghul troops, the man they hoped to capture still remained in the heart of the Moghul Empire, calmly performing his devotions at the temple of Jaganath.

During the weary months which had elapsed since Sivaji's departure from his own country, his mother, Jijabai, had, with ever-increasing agony of suspense, waited for news of his return. In her residence at the fortress of Raigarh she knelt daily before the altar of her protectress, the goddess Bhavani, and implored help for the safety of her son. Towards the end of December of the same year, word was brought to the Rani that a party of *Bairagis*, on their homeward trek from the shrine of Jaganath, begged to be allowed to spend a night within the walls of the fort.

Jijabai's intense piety allowed no one but herself in person to undertake the welcome of the holy men, whose leader, as she approached the gates, darted forward and prostrated himself at her feet. The disfiguring ashes of the ascetic were powerless to hide the beloved features of the idolised son from the mother, who had almost despaired of ever again holding him in her arms.

Aurangzeb's policy of religious persecution.

Beginning with the year 1666, the treatment by the Emperor of his Hindu subjects showed a marked change for the worse. It was as though Aurangzeb's vindictive nature wished to make the entire Hindu population of India responsible for Sivaji's so cunningly devised escape. On the other hand, the Emperor's relations with the Musulman population were greatly improved by the fact that even those Moslems whose indignation had been aroused by the series of vile crimes by which the throne had been gained, were reconciled by Shah Jehan's letter written from his death-bed, according to his son his full pardon for all wrongs committed.

The Emperor was at this period of his reign about fifty years of age and his intense bigotry, from early youth one of his most powerful characteristics, began to exercise an overwhelming influence on his entire policy of government. Typical of this was the repeal, in the year 1667, of a law which had been long in existence and which required all merchants, irrespective of race and creed, to pay a tax when offering their goods for sale.

In 1667, Aurangzeb, by imperial decree, abolished this duty in the case of Mahommedan merchants, whilst ordering that it should be maintained for all traders of the Hindu faith.

This unwise step was the prelude to a policy of vandalism which struck at the heart of the most sacred traditions of Hinduism. Shah Jehan had given the city and district of Mathura, the centre of the worship of Krishna, to his son Dara Shekoh as his personal *jagir*, and, as a result, a very warm regard and sympathy had sprung up between that liberal-minded prince and the Brahmin priests of the great temple of Keshav Rai.

To Dara's mystic nature the beautiful allegory embodied in the story of Krishna and Radha had made such strong appeal that, desiring to give proof of his feelings, he surrounded the shrine of the deified hero with a splendid railing of carved stone.

Though Dara Shekoh's tragic life had long since been brought to its close, Aurangzeb's hatred of him still survived and found expression in his wish to strike at the shrine which had been sacred to his brother ; also, to his puritanical mind, there was something abhorrent in a human love story being allowed to point a Divine moral.

The governorship of Mathura was conferred by the Emperor on a Sunni Musulman of the most orthodox type,

named Abdun Nabi, who, in obedience to his sovereign's command, caused the carved railings erected by Dara to be demolished.

The ensuing years saw the complete abandonment by the Emperor of even the faintest semblance of religious toleration. On April 9, 1669, he openly declared his antagonism to the Hindu faith and all its institutions by issuing a decree commanding the indiscriminate destruction of all Brahminical temples within the Moghul Empire. The centres of Sanskrit learning maintained by the Brahmins in the ancient homes of Hindu culture, such as Benares and Mathura, were compelled to close their doors, and bands of men armed with hatchets swarmed over the country carrying out the Emperor's disastrous policy of wholesale destruction.

Insatiable in his desire to violate the Hindu faith and to emphasise in every possible way the triumph of Islam over idolatry, Aurangzeb commanded that the great temple of Bisheshwar, in Benares, the holiest fane of the Savaites, should be razed to the ground and on its site erected a mosque, the lofty minarets of which would always constitute an insult to the Hindu population of his empire.

Aurangzeb possessed neither the genius of Akbar nor the wisdom of Jehangir and Shah Jehan, who had by judicious government made of the house of Timur a truly Indian dynasty which Moghul and Hindu alike were proud to serve. His insane lapse into the policy of the early Turki and Pathan conquerors struck at the very heart of the great national edifice which had been called into being with so much circumspection by his predecessors.

Jat revolts in Mathura, and in the Punjab.

The first active signs of the storm which was brewing showed itself in that same year 1669 in the shape of a revolt of the Jat peasantry in the district of Mathura, under the leadership of Gokla, zemindar of the village of Tilpat. In this revolt Abdun Nabi, the imperial Governor of Mathura, was slain and it was not until a year later that the rising was crushed and Gokla captured by the Emperor's troops. The brave zemindar suffered the most cruel death, his limbs being severed from his body; his wife and children were forced to become converts to Islam; and the city of Mathura was punished by the total destruction of the temple of Keshav Rai.

The next to suffer from the vindictiveness of the Emperor were the Jats of the Punjab, who had in large numbers embraced the Sikh faith.

Their Guru, Tegh Bahadur by name, grandson of the ill-

fated Arjun Mal, was now High Priest of the Sikhs and had originally been a loyal subject of the throne, but Aurangzeb's unwarrantable treatment of all save the Moslem population of the empire had caused him to raise his voice in protest against the Emperor's religious intolerance.

Martyrdom of the Sikh Guru.

Tegh Bahadur's utterances soon became known to Aurangzeb, who summoned the High Priest to Delhi, where he was given the choice between Islam and death. Without a moment's hesitation he declared his readiness to die for his faith and expired after five days of unspeakable torture inflicted by the Emperor's orders.

Mahratta War of Liberation.

It was an easy matter for the Emperor to quell these comparatively small rebellions by force and unparalleled cruelty, but there existed a far more serious menace to his suzerainty in the firm, unshakable resolve of Sivaji to gain absolute freedom for Maharashtra, which, as his experiences at the court of Agra had plainly shown him, was an impossibility under a ruler of the type of Aurangzeb. From the time of his return to Raigarh, the Mahratta chief's mind was set upon winning complete independence for his country and his people, and he employed four years, from 1666 to 1670, in carefully preparing a campaign which was to restore to him the forts which, under the Treaty of Purandar, he had agreed to make over to the empire. The night of February 17, 1670, marked the commencement of the struggle with the very formidable attempt at the reconquest of the famous stronghold of Singhgarh (the Lion's Fort), situated fifteen miles from the city of Poona and held by a strong Moghul garrison under the command of a well-known Rajput officer named Udaibhan Gaur. Sivaji entrusted this dangerous enterprise to Tanaji Malusre, the companion of his youth, than whom he could have made no wiser choice.

An original and striking method peculiar to the Deccan was resorted to in this assault, which consisted in employing the ghorpad, a large lizard of the iguana species. The reptiles, when made use of for work of this kind, had been previously trained to climb a rock undisturbed by the attachment to their tail either of a thick rope or of a rope scaling ladder, and, when they reached the summit, to get a firm grip of the rock with their claws. A soldier was then sent up this ladder to attach it to the battlements of the hill fort and thus to make ready for the storming parties who, at a given signal, moved to the assault.

The particular ghorpad which Sivaji determined should be made use of in the storming of Singhgarh had been named

by him Yeshwant, and had proved its prowess in no fewer than twenty-seven similar exploits. Some of the Koli aboriginals residing in the neighbourhood of Singhgarh acted as guides to the Mahrattas, who arrived in the dead of night at the foot of the rocky hill.

The ghorpad was here released from its cage and, the rope having been attached to its tail, scaled the rock. In this case the customary signal was dispensed with and the reptile had barely reached the summit when Tanaji, closely followed by his younger brother Suryaji, and by fifty Mahratta infantry, pulled themselves up by the rope, their swords held between their teeth. Having successfully reached the battlements, the heroic band advanced cautiously towards the principal gate of the fort in order to throw it open to the larger contingent, who were moving up the steep ascent used in the ordinary way by the garrison stationed at the fort.

This important goal seemed almost within their grasp when the alarm was sounded and the entire garrison poured forth, led by Udaibhan in person. Tanaji, who had on many occasions given proof of reckless courage, unhesitatingly challenged Udaibhan to single combat, a challenge after the real heart of the gallant Rajput, and promptly accepted by him. The duel was watched with bated breath by the imperial and Mahratta troops. After some moments during which both men fought with the utmost chivalry and courage, Tanaji fell pierced to the heart by Udaibhan's sword; but in receiving his own fatal wound he had inflicted a deadly one on his brave adversary and thus, within a brief space, both sides were bereft of their great leaders.

At first it seemed as though Tanaji's death would have disastrous effects upon his followers, who turned in an attempt to flee, but the voice of his brother Suryaji, raised in contempt at this display of weakness, rallied the small company of Mahrattas to the call. Shouting "Har! Har! Mahadeo!" they turned on their enemies, and fighting their way to the gates of the fortress, flung them open. The Mahratta war-cry rang out a second time as the main body of Sivaji's troops rushed in to the assistance of their comrades, followed in a very short space by the firing of a thatched outbuilding of the fort, the prearranged signal which was to inform the Mahratta chief, who had been watching the scene from Rajgarh,[1] a fort situated nine miles away, that Singhgarh had fallen and that victory was his.

[1] Not to be confused with Raigarh.

The first sight which greeted Sivaji as he rode, attended by his chief officers, at dawn of the following day, into the captured fort, was the dead body of his much-loved friend.

As the Mahratta prince gazed upon Tanaji with grief-stricken eyes, the memories of those bygone days when they had jointly vowed to set their country free overwhelmed him and, in response to a soldier who proffered his congratulations to him for having won the Lion's Fort, he sadly replied: "I have got the Fort but I have lost the Lion".[1]

Within a few months of the conquest of Singhgarh, Purandar and practically all the forts ceded to the empire were retaken by the Mahratta storming columns, and at the end of the month of September 1670 Sivaji began operations with a view to raiding the great and important harbour-town of Surat. At the head of 15,000 cavalry, the Mahratta chief swept over Gujarat and reached the gates of Surat on October 3, without encountering any resistance.

With inexplicable carelessness the Moghul authorities had only a nominal garrison of 500 men to defend the city, in consequence of which their attempt at opposition was a mere farce, and Sivaji and his troops entered Surat in triumph.

The Prince's first act was to levy a substantial ransom from the wealthy mercantile communities of Surat, which included the English, French and Dutch East India Companies, all of whom owned factories in the port. The French and Dutch agreed to pay the sum demanded, but the English factor, Streinsham Master by name, bluntly refused, and during some hours succeeded, with only fifty English sailors, in defending the unfortified trading station against a much superior force of Mahrattas. At the end of this time, Sivaji, whose chivalrous nature was greatly impressed by the dauntless courage of his opponent, suggested negotiations for a peaceful adjustment, which finally led to his accepting some trifling personal gifts from the East India Company's warehouse in return for leaving the English settlers unmolested.

From the Bohras, a very rich Shiah Moslem community of the Ismailiya sect, Sivaji demanded a sum far in excess of those levied upon the French and the Dutch. Two days later, on October 5, the Mahratta chief and his troops evacuated Surat and, laden with spoil, rode back to the

[1] Kincaid and Parasnis, *A History of the Maratha People*, vol. i. chap. xx. p. 231.

Deccan. The carrying out of this second raid upon Surat had a far deeper meaning than would appear on the surface. The riches acquired were destined by Sivaji to assist him in carrying out a long-cherished plan, that of a direct challenge to Aurangzeb's supremacy at sea.

Beginnings of the Mahratta fleet.

As a result of his previous victorious campaigns, a large portion of the Southern Konkan had come under his rule, which, in the early part of the sixteenth century, had formed part of the Nizam Shahi kingdom of Ahmednagar, then under the regency of the great Abyssinian minister, Malik Ambar. The government of the Ahmednagar Konkan had been entrusted by Malik Ambar to a family of his own race, who established their headquarters on the rocky island of Janjira, where their descendants rule to-day. The Abyssinians were born seamen, and the Sidi [1] rulers of Janjira had acted as hereditary Admirals of the Fleet successively to Ahmednagar, Bijapur and to the Moghul Empire.

Sivaji, with the spoils of Surat, how hastened to build in his Konkan dominions a Mahratta fleet composed of 400 war-vessels of varying type, which he manned principally with Bhandaris, members of a local Hindu caste known from the earliest times as expert seamen. The command of the Mahratta navy was conferred upon a Musulman named Daulat Khan, a most distinguished sailor, destined in due course to oppose the formidable Moghul fleet under the admiralship of the Prince of Janjira.

As soon as Sivaji had sufficient ships, he made use of them to seize merchant vessels from Surat and Cambay, carrying the silks of Ahmedabad and the produce of Berar and Khandesh to Basra and the Arabian ports. Their rich cargoes went to swell the Mahratta prince's treasury at Raigarh.

Pilgrim ships conveying Musulmans to Mecca and Medina were intercepted and taken as prizes of war into the Maharashtra harbours. The squadrons of the Sidi of Janjira were totally unable to cope with this piracy, the more so as his army required all available resources to resist the continuous Mahratta attacks upon his territories situated on the mainland. At this period, approximately the year 1671, unexpected assistance came to Sivaji, which enabled him to extend his operations as far as Bundelkhand.

Rise of Chhatrasa Bundela.

Shortly after Aurangzeb had usurped the throne, the peace of Central India had been seriously disturbed by the

[1] The Indo-Abyssinian chiefs are all given the Arabic title of Sidi (Lord) by the inhabitants of India.

raids of a Bundela robber chief, named Champat Rao, whose headquarters were the former Chandel capital of Mahoba. In the year 1660, after a considerable amount of fighting, this man fell in battle, but Mirza-Raja Jai Singh of Amber took pity upon his young son Chhatrasal, then a child of eleven, and, watching over him, obtained for him, when he reached manhood, a post in the imperial service. The young Bundela proved his worth and served with distinction under the Mirza-Raja's banner during the Purandar campaign.

Aurangzeb's ruthless policy towards the Hindu population of the empire, however, brought about a complete revulsion of feeling in the hitherto loyal Chhatrasal, and inspired him with a violent desire on his part to champion the cause of his own co-religionists.

News of Sivaji's repeated successes had meanwhile become known far beyond the borders of the Deccan, and the high-spirited young Bundela, now twenty-one years of age, deserted the Moghul camp without further hesitation and, accompanied by his wife and a few retainers, made his way to the Mahratta prince at Raigarh.

Sivaji was quick to see of what immense value the enthusiastic youth could be to him in the furtherance of his aims, but replied in measured tones to Chhatrasal's petition to be allowed to serve in the Mahratta army. He told him that his proper place was in his own country, to which he should return forthwith and stir up the Bundelas against the Emperor, just as he had himself stirred up the Mahrattas. Chhatrasal instantly agreed to Sivaji's suggestions and started for Bundelkhand at the head of a total force of five cavalry troopers and twenty-five foot soldiers, thirty men in all, with the object of liberating his own country.

Never were the words "Fortune favours the brave" more strikingly illustrated. When he arrived in his native land he found its inhabitants in a state of seething revolt at an order issued by Fidai Khan, the imperial Governor of Gwalior, for the destruction of the great temple of Chhatar Bhoj at Orchha. An attempt to execute this decree by force of arms was frustrated by the Bundelas of Orchha, who inflicted a severe defeat upon the Moghuls. This moment was naturally a most propitious one for Chhatrasal, whose call to his fellow-countrymen to rise against the oppressor met with wide response. The wild Rajput clansmen of Bundelkhand still numbered many who had fought for Champat Rao of Mahoba and who now enthusiastically

flocked to the banner of his son. Maharaja Sujan Singh of Orchha, the titular head of the Bundela race, though he did not actually join in the exploits of the young leader, sent him a secret message of warm encouragement.

Within a few months Chhatrasal's army had so increased in strength that he was able to commence a campaign which led him from victory to victory and eventually, years later, ended in his restoring the complete independence of Bundelkhand from the Moghul domination.

The Emperor was now beginning to realise that Sivaji was something more than a rebellious zemindar and that his influence with, and hold upon, the Mahrattas constituted a very grave menace to the empire.

Moghul invasion of Maharashtra.

In 1672, Aurangzeb despatched a powerful army against the Mahrattas, under the command of a noble of the court, who bore the high title of Mahabat Khan. The selection of this man was not fortunate. No greater proof of his character and singular unfittedness for such a post can be required than the fact that he was accompanied on his campaign by a retinue of 400 Afghan and Punjabi nautch girls.

He first advanced to the strong fortress of Salhir, which he besieged, but on hearing that a Mahratta force was on its way to relieve the garrison, Mahabat Khan sent the greater portion of his army against the enemy troops without first ascertaining, by means of reconnaissance, the true position of his foes, with the result that his army found itself suddenly assailed on all sides by formidable Mahratta columns under the skilled leadership of two of Sivaji's most trusted officers, Moro Pant Pingle and Pertab Rao Gujar. A complete rout of the imperial army followed, in which 125 war elephants, 6000 horses and the entire Moghul siege-train fell into the hands of the victors.

Triumph of Sivaji.

Only 2000 of the 40,000 men under Mahabat Khan's command succeeded in making their escape, and, with their defeated leader, reached the safe protection of the walls of Aurangabad. With a proud heart, Sivaji, who had awaited the return of his troops at Raigarh, watched the long line of captured elephants and guns, and realised the truth of the motto on his seal ; " the first small Moon " had waxed great enough for its beams to dim the light of the Moghul Sun, and Maharashtra was liberated—free now to live her own life and follow her own faith and ideals.

The difficulty which now arose for Sivaji was the choice of the title by which he could emphasise his position as

liberator of his country. The designation of Raja borne by him had been conferred upon his father by the King of Ahmednagar and actually signified nothing more than the honour of nobility ; and the only territories legally his own were the districts of Poona and Supa held by Shahaji in *jagir* from the Nizam Shahi.

During the recent conflict from which he had emerged victorious, Sivaji's commands had been loyally complied with by all the chiefs of the great Mahratta houses, such as the Jadhavs, Shirkes and Mohites, but in the more peaceful days now at hand it was questionable whether, in spite of the fact that he claimed descent from Rama through the royal line of Mewar, these nobles would not consider their families infinitely superior to the Bhonsles and resent Sivaji's occupation, at the state councils, of a seat on a dais above them.

To prevent this dispute, which could only be disastrous to the best interests of the newly freed country, Sivaji's personal adherents, both Brahmin and Mahratta, urged him to conciliate all parties by seeking solemn consecration as lawful sovereign of Maharashtra at the hands of the Brahmin priesthood. By one of those strange chances which sometimes occur, the year 1674 brought to the Deccan a Brahmin pandit from Benares, Gaga Bhatta by name, known and revered throughout India for his saintly life and profound knowledge of ancient Hindu tradition and law, who was on a pilgrimage to the holy shrines of Nasik and Pandharpur. News of the pandit's transit through the country reached Sivaji, who, seizing the opportunity, sent Gaga Bhatta a genealogical tree showing the descent of the Bhonsles from the royal house of Mewar, and at the same time most graciously inviting the Brahmin pandit to consecrate him as sovereign of Maharashtra. Gaga Bhatta announced his willingness to perform the ceremony, making only one condition, which was that Sivaji should first undergo the ceremonial purification and readmission into the Kshatriya caste, which the Bhonsles had forfeited by their lengthy residence in the somewhat lax social atmosphere of Maharashtra.

Coronation of Sivaji.

In the early part of May of that same year, Gaga Bhatta came to Raigarh, where Sivaji received him with royal honours. For several days subsequent to the high priest's arrival, the Mahratta chief submitted to the purification rites, which concluded by his solemn investiture with the Sacred Thread worn by the three twice-born castes. Sivaji, ere retiring for the solemn vigil in which he was to spend the

night before the final ceremony fixed for June 6, made his way to the zenana to seek his mother's blessing. As Jijabai, now eighty-three years of age, placed her hands upon the head of the beloved son who knelt before her, her thoughts may well have travelled back to those far-off days when, deserted by her consort for a fairer face, she had found her only solace in her child. From that moment she had unceasingly striven to imbue his impressionable mind with the noblest Hindu traditions of ancient times ; her reward had now come ; the hope that she might live to see Sivaji acclaimed as the liberator of his race from the oppressor's yoke was about to be fulfilled.

Shortly after sunrise on the following morning, June 6, the supreme rite was solemnised with all the splendour of ancient Hindu custom. Bareheaded and clad in white robes, Sivaji, followed by his mother and the ladies of his zenana, entered the Hall of Audience, where a golden throne, draped with velvet and tiger skins, had been prepared for him. The priests chanted, and sixteen beautiful Brahmin women, splendidly arrayed, sprinkled the Monarch Designate with water from the sacred Ganges, and waved golden lamps above his head to scare the evil spirits from his path. The attendants now robed him in garments of cloth of gold and placed the jewelled turban of royalty upon his head.

For a few moments Sivaji knelt in prayer at the foot of the throne, and then, as he seated himself upon it for the first time, a mighty cry arose from the vast audience filling the hall : " Sivaji Chatrapati Maharaj ki Jai ! "—" Victory to Sivaji, the King of Kings ".

Shortly after his coronation as King of the Mahrattas, Sivaji held a great durbar, and amongst the first to be presented to him was Henry Oxenden, ambassador of the English East India Company, which thus gave proof of its acceptance of Maharashtra as an independent power. The ambassador made his obeisance to the sovereign, and, on behalf of his company, begged his acceptance of a magnificent diamond ring. Sivaji, with that engaging frankness which characterised all his actions, beckoned Henry Oxenden to the throne, and throwing a silken robe of honour over the ambassador's shoulders, told him that it was his foremost desire to conclude a treaty of alliance with the English East India Company.

In order fully to understand Sivaji's reasons for desiring not only the friendship of the English, but also an offensive and defensive alliance with them, it is necessary to refer

briefly to the marriage, in the year 1660, of the Portuguese Princess Catherine of Braganza to King Charles II. of England.

Cession of Bombay to the British.

The Princess received as part of her dower a rocky island situated on the Konkan coast, which had been previously named Bom Bahia, and which, at the moment of its cession, had a population of only eleven Portuguese families and a few native police. Though the Portuguese had never realised it, this apparently unimportant island possessed one of the largest and most protected natural harbours in the world. Charles II. wisely transferred the control of his new colony to the East India Company, and the Company's President at Surat, Gerald Aungier, in the year 1674—the year also of Sivaji's enthronement—quick to see the wonderful possibilities of the island, resolved to make it the headquarters of the Company in Western India.

Under Aungier's wise administration the rocky island of Bom Bahia rapidly became a centre of commerce and developed in due course into the great city of Bombay, the recognised gateway to India. The gigantic harbour of the island constituted an invaluable naval base, and it was for this reason that the friendship of the East India Company was of the greatest importance both to Sivaji and to his opponent, the Sidi of Janjira. It was, however, necessary for the directors of the Company to exercise great tact and caution, as anything further than a friendly agreement with the King of Maharashtra might easily have led to trouble with the Emperor, in whose territories most of their factories were situated.

Oxenden was accordingly instructed not in any way to pledge English assistance in Sivaji's more or less constant struggle with the Sidi, but merely to enter into an amicable settlement with the new sovereign.

Treaty between Sivaji and the East India Company.

This treaty of friendship was duly signed by Sivaji and the East India Company on July 12, 1674, and in return for a policy of benevolent neutrality towards himself should he be at war with the empire, the King of Maharashtra granted permission to the East India Company to establish factories at Hubli and Rajapur, in Kanara.

Sivaji's policy of toleration.

Sivaji now proceeded to create a permanent ministry composed of eight members, placing at their head the Brahmin, Moro Pant Pingle, to whom he gave the title of Peshwa, or Prime Minister. To another Brahmin member of the ministry, styled the Pandit Rao, the Maharaja entrusted the safe keeping of all the Hindu temples, and also power to

grant all Hindu religious endowments throughout his kingdom.

Although the new state he had founded was essentially Orthodox Hindu, it was particularly in his treatment of all religious institutions that Sivaji differed from Aurangzeb, whose bigoted outlook he never confused with the doctrines of Islam as a faith.

Mosques and tombs of Musulman saints, and colleges of Arabic and Persian learning also received endowment from the Mahratta government; and this broad-minded attitude towards Islam earned for the King the whole-hearted loyalty of his Mohammedan subjects. No blame can attach to Sivaji if, in granting these concessions, wider schemes figured in his mind, all of which had the one great aim of weakening the Emperor's power and freeing as many of his own co-religionists as possible throughout India. For this purpose he sought an alliance with the Shiah Musulman kingdom of Golconda, knowing full well that Aurangzeb's detestation of the Shiahs equalled, or possibly even exceeded, that which he felt for the Hindus. Aurangzeb, though many of his ablest civil and military officials were Persian Shiahs, did not hesitate to level insults at the faith which they professed, and his ambition to overthrow the Shiah monarchs of Bijapur and Golconda and to annex their kingdoms to his empire was quite as great as his desire to crush and, if possible, exterminate the Hindu element.

Changes in Golconda.

In the year 1672, Abdullah Kutub Shah of Golconda had died after a reign extending over forty-six years. He had no son, but left three daughters, who, however, by the laws of the kingdom, were not eligible to succeed him. The eldest daughter had married Syed Ahmed, who held the office of Wazir; the second had become the wife, many years before her father's death, of Aurangzeb's ill-fated son, Mohammed Sultan; whilst the youngest princess espoused Abul Hasan, scion of a distant branch of the Kutub Shahi house.

Syed Ahmed, immediately after the death of his father-in-law, attempted to seize the throne, but this attempt was frustrated in a few days, during which violent fighting took place in the streets of Hyderabad, by another leading noble named Syed Muzaffar, who, heading a counter-revolution, placed Abul Hasan, the husband of the youngest princess, upon the throne with the title of Abul Hasan Kutub Shah.

At first this choice of a sovereign created consternation for the reason that, for sixteen years previous to his accession,

the name of Abul Hasan had stood in the capital for all that was undisciplined and licentious. Avoiding those of his own rank in life, he took his pleasures in the lowest quarters of the city and in the homes of the dancing girls ; but, with his advent to the throne of Golconda, Abul Hasan revealed a very different character, and quite soon proved himself an able, conscientious and determined ruler.

Syed Muzaffar, who was appointed Wazir, had, in placing the new sovereign on the throne, thought he would prove a mere puppet in his hands, but, finding himself mistaken, now commenced to plot against his master. Abul Hasan soon discovered his Wazir's intentions, and with the assistance of a Mahratta Brahmin named Madanna Pant, Muzaffar's secretary, had the treacherous minister arrested and thrown into prison.

Somewhat to the surprise of the Musulman nobles of the court, the Brahmin was appointed Wazir in his stead, with the title of Surya Prakash Rao. His younger brother, Akanna Pant, was created Commander-in-Chief of the army, and the post of his assistant was given to his nephew, Yengana, a distinguished officer, on whom the title of Rustam Rao was bestowed.

The administration of the Musulman kingdom of Golconda now practically passed into the hands of orthodox Hindus, a fact which tended greatly to increase Aurangzeb's hatred of the Kutub Shahis and to be of considerable help to Sivaji in his desire to make them allies.

Sivaji's far-reaching plans.

The Mahratta king fully realised that he had never yet been called upon to face the full strength of the Moghul empire, but that the moment Aurangzeb became aware of the recent political changes in the Deccan, all his vast resources would be concentrated upon achieving the overthrow of the newly born state of Maharashtra, and that then the only hope of salvation would lie in the existence of a safe retreat to the Far South for her armies, should they be defeated, until such time as a counter-attack upon her foes would become possible. A retreat to Mysore and to that part of the Carnatic ruled over by Vyankoji, half-brother to Sivaji, could be achieved only if the King of Maharashtra could bring those territories under his suzerainty.

Shahaji Bhonsle had left a will in which his estates were unequally divided between his two surviving legitimate sons. To Sivaji, the elder, there came only the comparatively small and poor Deccan *jagirs* of Poona and Supa, whereas the immense estates in Southern India were left to his younger

son, Vyankoji, the child of his favourite wife, Tukabai. A man of kindly disposition, Vyankoji was quite content to rule in his capital of Tanjore as a vassal Raja of the Adil Shah.

Alliance between Maharashtra and Golconda.

Sivaji, through his Mahratta envoy at Hyderabad, a clever Brahmin named Prahlad Niraji, opened negotiations with the King of Golconda, which resulted in a cordial invitation being sent by Abul Hasan to the Maharaja to visit his capital; and, what was of far greater importance, permission was granted to the Mahratta armies to proceed through the Kutub Shahi territory on their way to the South.

At the end of December 1677, Sivaji, having appointed the Peshwa, Moro Pant Pingle, Regent of Maharashtra, started at the head of a carefully selected army of 70,000 men on a march via Hyderabad to the South. All those brilliant military commanders who had helped him to create the new state, including Suryaji Malusre, Yesaji Kank and the daring cavalry leader, Netaji Palkar, now accompanied him. They advanced by easy stages, and did not reach Hyderabad until the beginning of February 1677. As Sivaji and his troops approached within a few miles of the city gates, a message was received from Abul Hasan Kutub Shah saying that, in order to pay signal honour to his guest, he proposed going forward to meet him in person. Sivaji, however, remembering that the monarch of Golconda rightfully claimed descent from a far older reigning house than his own, sent a courteous and tactful reply couched in these terms: "You are my elder brother; you should not come forward to receive a junior like me".[1]

On the strength of this message Abul Hasan now sent the Wazir, Madanna Pant, to greet the Mahratta king on his behalf and to escort him to the capital, where he received a magnificent welcome. Shouts of acclamation arose from the vast crowds which had gathered as Sivaji and his generals rode through the streets of the city, one of the finest and wealthiest in India. From the balconies of the houses the wives and daughters of prominent citizens showered gold and silver flowers upon their sovereign's guests. Arrived at the Hall of Public Audience, the Mahratta king and his officers were received in durbar, and at the conclusion of the presentations the two monarchs retired and held a private conference, which lasted three hours, during which they discussed the relations of their respective states.

Sivaji remained in Hyderabad for a month as the guest

[1] Jadunath Sarkar, *Shivaji and his Times*, chap. xii. p. 331.

of the King of Golconda, for the whole of which time he was regally entertained, splendid banquets taking place, varied by tilting matches between the Kutub Shahi and Mahratta nobles. This period was by no means entirely devoted to festivities, but also to close negotiations between the ministers of both sovereigns, ending with the signature by Abul Hasan and Sivaji of a treaty of offensive and defensive alliance, in which they pledged themselves to support each other in any struggle against the Moghuls, and in which Sivaji was promised a park of Golconda artillery for his projected campaign in the south.

Sivaji's march to the south.

The Mahratta king now took leave of Abul Hasan Kutub Shah and commenced to lead his army towards the Carnatic. Amongst the prominent men who accompanied him was a Brahmin named Narayan Raghunath Hanumante, formerly Prime Minister to Vyankoji of Tanjore, who was to prove of the greatest value to his enterprise.

The early part of May 1677 saw Sivaji's move towards the hill fortress of Jinji, his first objective, and this great stronghold, originally built by the Vijayanagar kings, was surrendered to him by the Bijapur officer who governed it without a shot being fired. The success of Sivaji's southern campaign was now assured. The surrender of Jinji was followed by the capture of the almost equally famous fortress of Vellore, which opened the road to his brother's capital.

The court of Tanjore, having been informed of the Mahratta's rapid approach towards the city, was greatly divided in the advice which it tendered to the sovereign in this crisis. The Mahratta and Tamil officers naturally urged him to throw in his lot with Sivaji ; the Musulman element, on the other hand, entreated him to hold fast to his allegiance to Bijapur. Finally, though in a very half-hearted manner, the Raja yielded to the Hindus, and, attended by his Minister of State, proceeded to his brother's camp, where Sivaji received him most affectionately and immediately proposed a division of the southern dominions of the house of Bhonsle. This proposal was that Vyankoji should retain Tanjore and all the immensely rich *jagirs* in the Carnatic as Sivaji's ally, whilst Bangalore and the Mysore estates should pass to the Mahratta king. These very fair proposals were, at the instance of his Moslem officers, rejected by Vyankoji, who suddenly fled from his brother's camp, prepared to resist any further advance on his part.

A Mahratta detachment, commanded by Hambir Rao

Mohite, one of the most brilliant cavalry leaders in Sivaji's army, found itself unexpectedly attacked by a large contingent from Tanjore, but the southern troops, in spite of their superiority in numbers, suffered a crushing defeat and fled in disorder towards their own capital. Sivaji, quick to seize his advantage, sent a column to invade his brother's Mysore territories, and the city of Bangalore being occupied without resistance, he commenced preparations for an advance on Tanjore.

Meanwhile Vyankoji's determination to resist had given way to despair, and in his unhappiness he sought the advice of his wife Dipabai, who, notwithstanding her intense devotion to her lord, also greatly admired the chivalrous character and daring exploits of his brother. Following her advice, Vyankoji wrote to his former minister, Narayan Raghunath Hanumante, who had resigned office at Tanjore as a result of a quarrel with his sovereign, and begged him to act as mediator between him and Sivaji. Raghunath readily accepted the task of peacemaker, which did not prove a very arduous one, for the King of Maharashtra had never desired his brother's downfall and immediately wrote to him repeating his previous offer, with one stipulation only, that he should retain Jinji and Vellore. Vyankoji complied immediately with these terms, but no sooner had the treaty been signed than Sivaji, in a particularly graceful manner, announced his desire to bestow upon his sister-in-law Dipabai all the Mysore *jagirs* as a personal gift to her in recognition of the part she had played in bringing about this peaceful solution.

Raghunath Hanumante was now reinstated Chief Minister at Tanjore, and the Mahratta king, leaving an illegitimate son of Shahaji as Viceroy at Jinji, started upon his return march to Raigarh by way of the Bijapur districts of Bellary and Kopal. Some resistance was offered by the Bijapur garrisons, but eventually Sivaji annexed these territories, which were of twofold importance to him, firstly because their possession safeguarded his communications with his new sphere of influence in the South and secondly because, included within the boundaries of Kopal stood the ruins of the erstwhile proud capital of Vijayanagar. The Mahratta king fully grasped the value of tradition and the great appeal it would make to his people, and he desired to appear to them as the heir of the great line of sovereigns of the " City of Victory " in their struggles against Musulman domination.

More than ever did he appear as the champion of the sacred cause of Hinduism when, on April 2, 1679, Aurangzeb issued a decree reviving the infamous *jiziya* or poll-tax on Hindus, which had been abandoned by the great Akbar. This measure, which aimed alike at every Hindu, from the Maharaja in his palace to the ryot in his mud hut, as also at those orders of religious mendicants which play such an important part in the spiritual life of the Hindus, aroused a storm of protest amongst all classes. On the Friday after the issue of the decree, the Emperor, proceeding in state to prayer at the Jama Masjid at Delhi, found his path almost blocked by an immense crowd desirous of presenting a petition to him to repeal the order. Aurangzeb's reply was a command to his guards to disperse the multitude by force, and the soldiers being unable to achieve this result, he sent for elephants, who trampled his unfortunate subjects to death as their ruler passed on to his devotions.

Revival by Aurangzeb of the *jiziya*.

The demand for payment of the *jiziya* was sent to all the Hindu feudatories of the empire, and also, in spite of his being an independent sovereign, to Sivaji himself. The Mahratta king's reply was a letter of dignified protest, which, by its frankness, and, above all else, by its deep sympathy with all men and all creeds, showed the real beauty and calm strength of his character.

We will quote one passage which appears towards the end of the letter, the whole being too lengthy to embody here :

> May it please your Majesty ! If you believe in the true Divine Book and Word of God (*i.e.* the Koran) you will find there (that God is styled) Rabb-ul-alamin, the Lord of all men and not Rabb-ul-musalmin, the Lord of the Mohammedans only.
>
> Verily Islam and Hinduism are terms of contrast. They are (diverse pigments) used by the true Divine Painter for blending the colours and filling in the outlines (of His picture of the entire human species). If it be a mosque, the call to prayer is chanted in remembrance of Him. If it be a temple, the bell is rung in yearning for Him only. To show bigotry for any man's creed and practices is equivalent to altering the words of the Holy Book. To draw new lines on a picture is equivalent to finding fault with the painter.[1]

The meteoric career of the Liberator of Maharashtra was now drawing to its close, and this letter to the Emperor may be considered his last effort towards obtaining fair treatment from Aurangzeb for the Hindus.

[1] Jadunath Sarkar, *Shivaji and his Times*, chap. xiii. pp. 369 and 370.

Death of Sivaji.

Sivaji did not attain a great age, for his iron constitution had suffered severely from the many hardships and anxieties to which he had been exposed ; also, as he realised that his own powers were waning, he began to feel serious misgivings in regard to the future welfare of his kingdom when Sambhaji, whose character left much to be desired, should succeed him upon the throne. Towards the end of March 1680 the Maharaja, then only fifty-two years of age, was suddenly stricken with fever, and it was obvious from the first that the attack would prove fatal in a very few days. Fearless of death, Sivaji spoke words of comfort to the weeping women of his zenana and also to his trusted officers, as they stood at his bedside ; he begged them not to grieve for him, but to remember that, though his mortal frame perished, his soul would be reborn and would therefore be able to watch over his people for all time. On April 5, 1680, the man to whom the Mahratta nation owes its very existence passed from this earthly zone.[1]

Aurangzeb strikes at the Rajputs.

The important events which we have recorded in the South had their counterpart in the North of India, where a serious position had arisen.

The great feudatory princes of Rajputana had watched, with ever-increasing horror and dismay, the Emperor's persecution of members of the Hindu faith and the destruction

[1] In describing the career of Sivaji I have concentrated almost entirely upon his final and vitally important campaign of liberation against Aurangzeb, and have omitted any detailed account of his early struggles with the Deccan kings.

There is, however, one dramatic incident belonging to that period which cannot be altogether passed over in silence, even though in fact it shows that amongst his very fine qualities the Mahratta chieftain possessed a strain of ruthlessness exemplified in his slaying, in 1659, of the Bijapur general, Afzul Khan, when meeting him in conference near the fortress of Pertabgarh. This crime is denounced by the Musulman historian, Khafi Khan, as a deed of cold-blooded treacherous murder, while the Mahratta *bakhars* or chronicles, on the other hand, maintain that he had received information from a most trustworthy source that Afzul Khan was plotting against his own life and that Sivaji therefore was acting in self-defence. The Mahratta chief never failed in courtesy towards the gentler sex, but in regard to his dealings with his enemies he lacked the chivalry of so many of the Rajput princes, his policy being one of revenge for any wrong done to himself or his followers. There is a further explanation of Sivaji's killing of Afzul Khan in the fact that Sambhaji, the Mahratta chief's brother, had, shortly before, fallen in battle against the forces commanded by Afzul Khan, whose soldiers had desecrated the temple of Bhavani at Tuljapur. This shrine, by virtue of Bhavani being the tutelary goddess of the house of Bhonsle, was held in special reverence by all its members.

of their many beautiful and ancient shrines. Whilst retaining their allegiance to the house of Timur, whose salt they had eaten and whose glorious antecedents they had shared, their loyalty to Aurangzeb in person was being put to a very severe test.

The Emperor's fanaticism had by now reached such a pitch that, knowing it would be quite impossible to attain his supreme object, the destruction of Hinduism, so long as the ancient principalities were ruled over by dynasties tracing their origin to the epic ages, he resolved to make every effort to overthrow the power of the Rajput princes, and, wherever possible, to annex their dominions. Blinded by his religious fury, he failed to grasp that thereby he would be destroying the main pillars supporting the complicated structure of his empire.

Death of Maharaja Jaswant Singh.

The death, on December 10, 1678, at Jamrud in the Khyber Pass, of Maharaja Jaswant Singh of Marwar, who held the governorship of the district of Peshawar, brought about the crisis, and was the signal for the storm which raged almost without a break until the end of the Emperor's reign. Jaswant Singh had died without leaving any male issue, but his chief Queen, a princess of Mewar, was at the time of his decease expecting to become a mother, and yielding for this reason to the fervent entreaties of her Rathor nobles, allowed herself to be dissuaded from sacrificing her life on the funeral pyre of her lord. After the mortal remains of Jaswant Singh had been consigned to the flames amid the rocks of the Khyber, his widow, escorted by the nobles and their clansmen, proceeded to Lahore, where, shortly afterwards, she gave birth to a son, who received the name of Ajit Singh. The Maharani immediately sent a letter to Aurangzeb, informing him of the birth of her son, and in this letter, which was couched in the most loyal terms, she announced her intention to visit Delhi on her way back to Marwar, when she trusted to receive from the Emperor's hands the firman recognising the infant Ajit heir to his father's throne.

Birth of Ajit Singh.

Immediately after the death of Jaswant Singh, and before the news of the birth of his posthumous son had reached Delhi, the Emperor, in pursuance of his policy, had struck a blow of such severity to the Rathor kingdom as to reduce it to a condition of helplessness with a view to its eventual extinction.

A strong Moghul force, commanded by a noble to whom had been given the title of Khan Jehan, was despatched from Ajmere with orders to invade Marwar. The desert

state was practically defenceless, as all her leading Thakurs and their clans had followed Jaswant to the Khyber, and within a very few weeks Jodhpur had been captured by the Emperor's troops. Khan Jehan, acting in the spirit of his sovereign, destroyed every temple, both Hindu and Jain, within the gates of the city and sent their images as trophies to Delhi, where, in the presence of Aurangzeb, they were trampled on by the horses of the Imperial Guard.

The Rani's touching appeal that her son should be acknowledged as the rightful heir to Marwar, far from eliciting the reply she had hoped for, gave the Emperor the opportunity for an attempt to divide the Rathor house against itself. Without sending any direct information to the Rani, he selected one of the minor Rajput vassals of the imperial throne, named Indra Singh Rathor, Rao of Nagore, a great-nephew of Jaswant and likely to prove a willing tool for his schemes, and by imperial firman created him Maharaja of Marwar.

Indra Singh immediately proceeded to Jodhpur, where it soon became clear to him that his sovereignty was a purely nominal one, all power being vested in the commander of the Moghul garrison, whilst the Rathor clansmen, far from welcoming him as a sovereign, turned from him in contempt as a traitor to their cause.

When, in the early part of July 1679, the widowed Queen with her child, all unconscious of the events which had taken place in their own country, arrived in Delhi, escorted by her vassal chieftains, she found herself unprotected amongst her enemies, with the added bitterness of the knowledge that Marwar had been crushed under the tyrant's yoke.

Rise of Durga Das, the Rathor champion.

In this dark hour, when the Queen, so brave where she alone was concerned, but trembling for the safety of her child, had almost given way to despair, there arose to champion the cause of mother and son, one of the noblest and most chivalrous figures in the history of Rajputana. Durga Das Rathor, Thakur of Drunera, was the son of the chief minister, Askaran, who had fought so bravely at the side of Jaswant Singh on the disastrous field of Dharmat. Even to-day the name of Durga Das is a household word in Marwar, for his rare combination of dauntless courage and boundless loyalty to the head of his clan. He was determined not to play into the Emperor's hands by taking up an attitude of revolt, but obtained the Rani's permission to make a personal appeal to Aurangzeb to recognise the claim

of Ajit Singh to the throne of Marwar. Accompanied by another Rathor chief, named Ranchor Das, and by Raghunath Bhati,[1] the leading foreign noble of Marwar, Durga Das proceeded to the palace, where they were received by the Emperor in private audience. The Emperor replied in affable tones and with that air of sincerity which he could on occasion assume, that he considered Ajit as yet too young and too frail to be exposed to the desert climate, and that he would constitute himself his guardian and have him brought up in the imperial harem until he had reached a more mature age.

The Rajput envoys, as they heard the Emperor's words, knew them to mean that Jaswant's heir would be brought up in the faith of Islam and that, ere he attained to manhood, the descendant of the ancient royal house of Kanauj would be completely alienated from the belief of his ancestors, and with his lawful rank hidden under a Moghul title of nobility, would be entirely lost to his race. Something of the horror which this suggestion evoked in the minds of his listeners must have been visible in their faces and have warned the Emperor of coming danger, for, in the cynical belief that even the most loyal hearts may yield to the lure of ambition, he offered, if they would agree to his proposal, to divide the kingdom of Marwar amongst them. Tremulous with indignation, Durga Das answered Aurangzeb's contemptible offer with the following passionate outburst :

" Our country is with our sinews, and these can defend both it and our Lord ",[2] and with his fellow-envoys he left the Hall of Audience.

Scarcely had they reached the mansion where the Rani had taken up her abode and informed her of the fruitless result of their mission, than news was received that a strong force of Imperial Guards was approaching, with orders to seize mother and child and convey them to the fortress prison of Nurgarh.

With drawn swords the Rajput chiefs prepared to protect their Queen and her infant, and Durga Das in that crucial moment evolved a plan for their escape which, in its heroism, has seldom, if ever, been equalled even in the annals of Rajputana. His proposal was that at the approach of the Moghuls, Raghunath Bhati should create a diversion by

[1] Though the majority of the nobles in a Rajput state are of the same clan as the chief, there are always a few belonging to a foreign clan.

[2] Tod, *Rajasthan*, vol. ii. p. 45.

charging into their midst at the head of 100 mounted Rajputs, and that, under cover of this diversion, and surrounded by the main body of their clansmen, the Queen and her son, escorted by himself, should attempt to flee to Marwar.

The imminent peril of the Rani and her child gave occasion for another proof of devotion rivalling in bravery that given by Durga Das. A young slave girl in the Queen's retinue begged to be allowed to impersonate her mistress, and at her suggestion the child of a milkman residing in the neighbourhood was brought to the mansion and dressed in the garments belonging to the infant prince. By this deception she hoped to delay the Moghuls and to allow the Queen and her child to escape.

When the Imperial Guards, commanded by Fulad Khan, the Kotwal of Delhi,[1] approached the mansion, a volley of matchlock fire greeted them from windows above the outer gate, followed immediately by the throwing open of the great iron-studded framework which constituted the entrance, and Raghunath Bhati and his small band of horsemen, with lances couched, charged full into their foes. The force of the unexpected onslaught for a brief moment seemed to overwhelm even the tried soldiers of the Imperial Guard, but they promptly recovered their presence of mind and by sheer numerical superiority slowly but surely pressed the Rajputs back.

Profiting by the uproar caused by the clash of steel and the shouts of the combatants, Durga Das, at the head of the Rathors, rode forth through the back gates of the mansion. Surrounded by the gallant horsemen, mounted on a charger, was the brave Queen, and on her saddle bow she carried the cherished infant, upon whose frail life depended the last hope of the ancient line.

The battle within the precincts of the mansion continued for nearly two hours, but finally the large Moghul force triumphed and precipitated an entry into the residence over the mortal remains of the heroic Bhati and seventy of the hundred gallant troopers who had assisted him to keep the enemy at bay. Fulad Khan immediately made his way to the zenana, where he found the young slave girl, clad in the Queen's robes, clasping the milkman's child to her breast, ready to defend it at all cost. At first the Kotwal did not seem to realise the deception, but very soon his previous experience of Rajput gallantry brought him the conviction

[1] Chief of Police.

that they would never, in order to make their own escape, desert their Queen and her infant son. Without further hesitation, Fulad Khan ordered the arrest of the slave girl and child and, followed by his troopers, rode out in hot haste in pursuit of the fugitives. They came into touch with the rearguard of Durga Das' small force close to a bridge on the Jumna, nine miles beyond the gates of Delhi, and after a desperate struggle, in which the Rajput commanderRanchor Das and practically all his clansmen perished, the Moghuls reached the main body of Rathors with Durga Das at their head just as they were preparing to cross the river.

Durga Das' total force at that moment numbered ninety as against approximately three hundred imperial soldiers, but his presence of mind, never so marked as when all seemed lost, once more came to the rescue. He hastily gave orders to his fellow-chiefs and their forty troopers to conduct the Rani with all speed across the Jumna and to ride with her to Marwar ; and then with the fifty retainers left to him, he prepared to ensure his sovereign's safety by holding the bridge against the Moghuls.

This heroic fight continued for a full hour, at the end of which Durga Das, considering that sufficient time had elapsed for the Rani and her guard to make good their escape, turned his horse's head, and with five troopers only, all that remained of the fifty men he had kept with him, galloped across the bridge. The Rathor chief was himself suffering severely from numerous wounds, and it needed all his remarkable will-power and courage to sustain him against the physical weakness caused by loss of blood. Undaunted by bodily pain, his soul sang out a pæan of joy as he realised that he had preserved the Queen from her desperate peril, and that victory was his. The desert-bred horses of Durga Das and his five troopers sped on towards Marwar with scarcely a sign of fatigue, whereas the more luxuriously trained mounts of the Imperial Guard betrayed before long utter exhaustion, and Fulad Khan, rage and mortification in his heart, had no choice but to turn back to Delhi, there to report the failure of his mission to his imperial master.

All these stirring events had been enacted in the course of that same month, July 1679, and it was on the 20th that Tahir Khan, the Moghul Governor of Jodhpur and the actual ruler—though Indra Singh, the nominal King, still basked in the sunshine of his mock sovereignty—received tidings that Durga Das and his brother chiefs had crossed the frontier into Marwar and were making towards the capital.

During his advance all martial classes, Rajput and Jat, who had up to that moment been powerless, owing to lack of leadership, to resist the growing tyranny of the imperialists, flocked to the Rathor commander's banner, and when, on July 23, Durga Das arrived at the gates of Jodhpur, he had quite a considerable army with which to force an entry.

Tahir Khan and Indra Singh, realising their danger in the midst of a hostile population, had taken to flight together with their troops before Durga Das reached the gates of the city, and there being no further impediment, the chivalrous Rathor was able to reinstate the Rani at Jodhpur, where she took possession of the city in the name of her infant son, Ajit Singh. Aurangzeb's fury and consternation at the Moghul defeat on the Jumna and the surrender of Jodhpur were boundless.

War in Marwar. Aurangzeb proceeds to Ajmere.

After the issue of decrees removing Indra Singh from the throne of Marwar and degrading the incompetent governor, Tahir Khan, to lower military rank, the Emperor, on August 17 of the same year, sent a strong Moghul force, under the command of a distinguished officer named Sarbuland Khan, into Marwar as the advance guard of the actual imperial army, which, led by Aurangzeb in person, accompanied by his fourth son, Prince Mohammed Akbar, arrived at Ajmere on September 25 to superintend the campaign for the complete subjugation of the Rathor kingdom.

Merciless in his desire for revenge, the Emperor subjected the land of Marwar and its ill-fated inhabitants to every conceivable cruelty and humiliation. The Moghul columns poured into the country from all sides in a never-ending stream, and almost immediately the imperial standard was hoisted from the summit of Jodha Gir [1] to announce the recapture of the city. Moghul garrisons occupied the provincial towns, as also private castles, the property of the Thakurs; and the Hindu temples which had escaped destruction at the hands of Khan Jehan were now converted into mosques.

Annexation of Marwar.

The magnificent defence put up by the Rathors could not prevent the annexation of Marwar to the empire, but by their heroism in fighting every inch of their way, Durga Das and his brother chiefs succeeded in bringing the Rani and her son safely across the frontier into the neighbouring state of Mewar, where, being herself a princess of that line, she appealed to the Maharana Raj Singh, head of her house, for protection and assistance.

[1] The "Hill of Jodha", fortress-palace of Jodhpur.

Events in Mewar.

The peace concluded between the Maharana Amar Singh and the Emperor Jehangir in the year 1614 had remained unbroken ever since, and this era of tranquillity enabled the Sesodia kingdom to regain all its former prosperity. Whilst preserving an attitude of steadfast loyalty to the empire, the princes of the Sesodia kingdom had availed themselves of the privilege accorded to them by the terms of the treaty of peace and had never attended the imperial courts in person, nor taken any part in the politics of Delhi; at the same time their clansmen, usually under the command of the heir apparent, had always served under the Emperor's banner in any outside conflict in which he had been engaged.

The Maharana Raj Singh, one of the ablest rulers of his ancient line, and a man of noble and chivalrous character, extended the warmest possible welcome to his kinswoman and her child, but did not, at the moment of her arrival, pledge himself to take any warlike action on her behalf. His hesitation was greatly due to fear of bringing down upon his happy and prosperous people the sufferings to which the neighbouring countries had been exposed. Though his anger had been aroused by the reimposition of the poll-tax, which he had refused to pay, and though the widowed and defenceless Rani had all his sympathies, he would possibly have tried to avoid anything in the nature of actual revolt against the Moghuls but for an incident which no true Rajput, and least of all the Sun of the Hindus, could ignore.

The Raja of Kishangarh, head of one of the cadet branches of the royal house of Marwar, had a young daughter famed for her beauty throughout Rajputana. The report of her charms had also penetrated to the Emperor, and whether from a genuine desire to make the princess his wife, or because he hoped to play off one Rathor state against the other by showing marked favour to the Rathors of Kishangarh, Aurangzeb, almost simultaneously with his conquest of Marwar, or possibly for both these reasons, sent an envoy to the Raja of Kishangarh demanding his daughter's hand in marriage. On receiving a blunt refusal he immediately despatched a military force to besiege the Raja in his own capital.

The young princess, knowing that Kishangarh could not long hold out against the Moghul army, was faced with the dread alternatives of sacrificing her honour or undergoing the terrible death of self-immolation. In her extreme need she had resort to the age-old Kshatriya custom, and determined to seek a deliverer. Her choice fell upon Raj Singh of

Mewar, and she sent as her envoy her father's *purohit*, or family priest, who succeeded in making his escape from the beleaguered palace by a postern gate, and, reaching Udaipur, was immediately received in audience by the Maharana.

As soon as the preliminary words of greeting had been spoken by Raj Singh, the Brahmin threw the jewelled bracelet of the young Rani at his feet. Lifting it from the ground, the Maharana discovered a letter attached to it in the princess's own hand, commencing with these impassioned words: "Is the swan to be the mate of the stork: a Rajputni pure in blood to be wife to the monkey-faced barbarian?"[1]

In this letter she further declared that she would choose death rather than dishonour, but that her hand should be given in reward to the true Rajput who would save her from so terrible a fate. Raj Singh, the supreme chief of his race and descendant of the Deified Hero, the pattern of Kshatriya chivalry, had but one answer to this touching appeal. Within a few hours he had mounted his horse, and at the head of a selected band of vassals, all proud to accompany him on his gallant enterprise, was speeding towards Kishangarh.

With the resonant kettledrums of the Maharana, hope revived in the hearts of the besieged Rathors, who felt that help was at hand, and immediately sallied forth to attack their foes. The imperial army, caught between two fires, was practically annihilated, and Raj Singh with his vassals entered Kishangarh amidst the chants of the Brahmins, to claim his bride.

Mewar at war with the empire. Invasion by Aurangzeb.

The Prince knew full well that his gallant deed had brought down the Emperor's anger upon his head and that henceforth the die was cast between them, and in order to be in readiness for every emergency, issued, immediately upon his return to Udaipur, a summons to all the vassals of his kingdom to attend a conference at the capital.

Aurangzeb on his part was making active preparations to retaliate, and on November 30, 1679, left Ajmere at the head of a formidable army to invade and, if possible, conquer Mewar. Raj Singh, in agreement with his feudatory chieftains, adopted the war methods so successfully employed by his ancestor, the great Pertab, and, evacuating his capital and the plains, withdrew with his troops to the fastnesses of the Aravallis. The Deobari Pass leading to the capital was

[1] Tod, *Rajasthan*, vol. i. p. 301.

purposely left undefended, and it was by this road that, on January 4 of the following year, the Emperor and his army entered Udaipur. The Sunrise City, with her azure lakes and stately marble palaces, made no appeal to Aurangzeb, beyond that of heightening his thirst for revenge. The residences of the Maharana and of his nobles were razed to the ground, even the trees in the gardens were uprooted, and a hundred and seventy-two Hindu shrines suffered total demolition. The great temple of Jaganath was heroically defended for some hours by twenty Rajputs, who had sworn on the water of the sacred Ganges to die in defence of the Altar of their God, but finally that also was destroyed.

Passing on from Udaipur to Chitor, the Emperor continued his merciless acts of vandalism ; yet, had he but paused to think, this mighty sovereign would have realised the traditions of this city, with its silent palaces and temples, peopled only by the ghosts of its glorious past. He would have stayed his hand had he been capable of understanding that he could never, any more than the Musulman conquerors of an earlier age, succeed in overthrowing the faith, or killing the national spirit of the people, enshrined in that historic spot.

Aurangzeb now proceeded to nominate his son Prince Mohammed Akbar, Commander-in-Chief of the forces in Mewar, and entrusted him with the task of bringing about the complete subjugation of the Maharana. Simultaneously, he conceived a plan second to none in cunning and ingenuity, by which he hoped to deal the Rathors a fatal blow.

During the time which had elapsed since the escape of the Rani and her child from Delhi, the slave girl, who had so heroically impersonated her mistress with the milkman's infant son, had been kept in close custody in the imperial capital. Now, by the Emperor's orders, they were brought to Ajmere, and the boy publicly proclaimed to be the true heir of Jaswant, and Ajit Singh an impostor. For a brief space the succession seemed to be trembling in the balance, for, though naturally none of the Rathor feudatory chiefs who had accompanied the Rani to Delhi could have doubts as to the infant prince being the son of Jaswant Singh, some of the minor vassals who had remained in Marwar began to question the truth of his descent.

Knowing that the cause was lost if internal dissension were allowed to become rife, Durga Das appealed to the Maharana for support, and Raj Singh silenced the doubters by partaking of food off the same plate as the little prince

and betrothing him to his niece. In spite of his intense relief at this public recognition of the young heir to the Rathor kingdom by Raj Singh, Durga Das still feared greatly for Ajit's safety unless he could, until he had reached manhood, find refuge with some one who could be trusted to keep his domicile a complete secret from Aurangzeb, and also bring the child up in total ignorance of his own descent and the great destiny to which he should in due course be called.

Above the plains of Rajputana, on the summit of Mount Abu, there existed in Aurangzeb's day, as they do now, the matchless Jain temples of Dilwara with their adjoining monasteries. It was to the Jain Mahant, or Abbot of Dilwara, that Durga Das turned now, knowing that he could rely upon the goodwill of this representative of the faith of Mahavira, which, since time immemorial, had been honoured by the Hindu sovereigns of Rajputana. The High Priest immediately took charge of Ajit Singh, who was given a false name, and whom his guardian promised to educate without revealing his parentage to him until the time should be ripe for him to know and to claim his birthright.

Raj Singh was not content to limit his defiance of the Emperor merely to acknowledging Ajit Singh as Jaswant Singh's legitimate heir ; he was quick to follow up this blow to Aurangzeb's prestige by severe punishment in the field.

The Emperor had barely returned to Ajmere before the Sesodia forces, commanded by Raj Singh in person and his second son, Kumar Bhim Singh, emerged from the shelter of the Aravallis and started on a series of raids on the Moghul troops similar to those employed with so much success by Sivaji. The imperial army, which depended almost entirely for its supplies upon Bunjara caravans with grain from Malwa, was constantly faced by the loss of this important necessity of life, through Bhim Singh and his horsemen who intercepted successive caravans and carried off the precious booty to their own camp.

Finally, on June 2 of that same year, 1680, a large army, led by the Maharana, attacked Prince Akbar's camp at Chitor in the dead of night, and after inflicting severe losses on the Moghuls, retired to the hills again, with a spoil of a grain caravan and the 10,000 oxen employed in transit.

Aurangzeb watched these constant reverses and, above all, the danger of starvation for his army, with ever-increasing anxiety and hoped, by effecting a change of command, to bring about an improvement in the position. He transferred Prince Akbar to Marwar to direct operations

against the Rathors, and conferred the supreme command upon his third son, Prince Mohammed Azam. By this action the Emperor wished also to show his displeasure at Prince Akbar's conduct of the campaign in a very marked way. It can be asserted almost beyond doubt that the Prince had not brought all his resources to bear in dealing with the Sesodia, especially on the occasion of the attack on his camp at Chitor; the reason for this was not, however, due to incompetency, but sprang from far deeper and more human causes entirely overlooked by Aurangzeb.

Character of Prince Akbar.

The Prince had been brought up by his eldest sister, Zeb-un-Nisa, a highly gifted princess, whose name is associated with many romantic tales of those long bygone days and who educated her brother and inseparable companion in the liberal Sufi school of Islam to which she herself belonged. As he reached manhood, Prince Akbar met at the imperial court, and associated on terms of intimacy with many of the great Rajput feudatories, prominent amongst these being Maharaja Jaswant Singh and Jai Singh, the heir apparent of Mewar, and learnt to admire and esteem them at their true worth. This same warm-hearted youth had witnessed the battle fought by Durga Das and his fellow-chiefs in the streets of Delhi for the preservation of Jaswant's posthumous son, and his chivalrous nature had been fired with admiration for the gallant defenders. The thought of destroying the independence of such a people solely because of their religious faith and devotion to their sovereign had been from the very outset to the highest degree repellent to him, and his nomination to a lower command, and once more against a Rajput state, was an added bitterness.

It was with these feelings in his heart that Mohammed Akbar prepared to follow the Emperor's orders and set out for Marwar, where, on July 18, he established his headquarters at the small town of Sojat in the valley of the river Luni. The instructions given him by Aurangzeb were to advance into the Godwar district of Mewar and lay siege to the fortress of Kumbhalmir, where the Maharana had taken up his abode.

By the middle of September Akbar had accomplished part of his task and had occupied Nadol, the capital of Godwar, whilst his advance guard, commanded by his Chief of Staff, Tahawwur Khan, pushed on rapidly to Jhilwara within eight miles of Kumbhalmir. The Prince had made Nadol his temporary headquarters, intending to press on to the fortress as soon as his preparations were completed, and

it was at this moment that an unexpected move on the part of his adversaries altered the whole trend of events. A confidential envoy of the Maharana arrived at the camp, ostensibly to sue for terms of peace, but, when received by the Prince in private audience, he promptly explained the true purport of his mission, which was of a very different nature. As the spokesman not only of Raj Singh but also of Durga Das and his Rathors, the messenger boldly asserted that Aurangzeb's violent and totally unjustified persecution of the Hindus was slowly but surely bringing the empire to ruin, and that the only means of saving it, since appeals to the Emperor had many times proved fruitless, was to depose him, and to proclaim as his successor on the throne a sovereign who would pledge himself to govern the country on the lines of tolerance introduced by the great Emperor Akbar. Then the envoy, with a graceful gesture, invited the Prince to stand forward boldly and to constitute himself the deliverer of the empire, champion of liberal Musulman and Hindu alike, safe in the knowledge that the whole strength of the Sesodia and Rathor clans would rally to his call.

Revolt of Prince Akbar.

Deeply moved by this offer, the honesty of which he could not doubt, for every step of his advance into Rajputana had given him conclusive evidence of the misery which his father's implacable bigotry had brought upon a race formerly unswerving in loyalty to the Moghul Empire ; and perhaps feeling also that the name he bore might be a symbol of the great destiny in store for him, Prince Akbar accepted the proposal. The Rajput envoy returned to Kumbhalmir, and negotiations for a definite agreement were entered upon immediately, when the unexpected death of Maharana Raj Singh on October 22 caused them to be temporarily interrupted.

Kumar Jai Singh, the deceased sovereign's son, was immediately proclaimed Maharana of Mewar, and, at the expiration of the customary month of mourning, the discussions with the Moghul prince were resumed, resulting, by the end of December, in a definite treaty of alliance.

As soon as Akbar had assured himself, through the agency of Tahawwur Khan, that he could depend upon the support of the officers and men of the imperial division under his command, he wrote to the Maharana, informing him that all was ready. On January 1, 1681, four eminent Musulman ecclesiastics resident at Nadol issued a *fetva*, in which they declared that, by his misgovernment, Aurangzeb had for-

feited the throne ; and that same day witnessed the entrance into Nadol of a force of 40,000 men, composed of Sesodias and Rathors under the joint command of Prince Bhim Singh and Durga Das, who paid homage to Prince Akbar as Emperor of Hindustan.

Rebel march on Ajmere. Aurangzeb's peril.

Events followed upon each other in quick succession, and on the day after his proclamation, Akbar headed an army of 70,000 men—the 40,000 Sesodias and Rathors who had entered Nadol and 30,000 of his own troops—and marched against Ajmere, where Aurangzeb was in residence.

The Emperor's position at that moment seemed threatened at every point. His throne had practically been wrested from him, and even his personal liberty was imperilled, owing to the fact that the flower of his army had been sent to Chitor under Prince Azam, and that only a very small number of soldiers, too old for active service, the clerks of the Imperial Pay Office and the eunuch attendants of the harem, remained to protect him.

Despair had seized upon the women of the harem, and the marble pavilions in which they lived resounded with their laments as they pictured a future of misery and of bloodshed. Aurangzeb's coolness never for one instant left him, though he was fully aware that approximately 120 miles only separated him from the rebel army. His cunning brain was hard at work to find other means with which to defeat his enemies, since the position was such that any attempt to beat them by force of arms was necessarily doomed to failure. Amongst the officers in attendance upon him at Ajmere was one named Inayat Khan, whose daughter was the wife of Prince Akbar's Chief of Staff, Tahawwur Khan. Inayat Khan was now summoned to the Emperor's presence and compelled to write to his son-in-law that, if within a few hours from receiving this letter, he had not deserted Prince Akbar and started on his journey to Ajmere, his sons would be sold into slavery and the women of his harem left to the tender mercies of the imperial soldiery. This missive reached Tahawwur Khan on January 15, just as Prince Akbar's army was within ten miles of Ajmere, and driven to the verge of madness by these terrible threats to his nearest and dearest, the Chief of Staff fled under cover of night to the imperial camp situated at Dorahah, some three miles distant, and sought audience with the Emperor. Fearing for his personal safety, Tahawwur refused to hand over his weapons of war to the guard before entering the tent, and this being interpreted by the soldiers as a plan to

assassinate Aurangzeb, they fell upon the luckless officer and killed him where he stood.

The flight of the Chief of Staff caused what practically amounted to a panic amongst the Moghul portion of Prince Akbar's army, who deserted wholesale and returned to the Emperor's banner, and almost simultaneously, though for quite different reasons, the Prince was deprived of the support of his Rajput contingent. Aurangzeb's wily mind had also conceived a plan by which he sought to alienate the Sesodia and Rathor sympathies from his son: another epistle, this one written by the Emperor himself and addressed to Prince Akbar, by a clever manœuvre, found its way into the hands of Durga Das. In this letter Aurangzeb congratulated his son, in terms of great warmth, on his able deception of the Rajputs, and ordered him in the forthcoming battle to place them in the van, when they would be caught and almost certainly annihilated between the Emperor's forces in front and Akbar's troops in the rear.

Vaguely alarmed, though his generous nature refused to believe in such treachery, the Rathor chief instantly betook himself to Akbar's tent for the purpose of asking for an explanation. By one of those accidents which in this case seemed premeditated, Durga Das found his way barred by the attendants on guard, who informed him that the Prince slept and must not be disturbed. With growing uneasiness Durga Das now hurried to Bhim Singh, his comrade-in-arms, and being unable, when reviewing what had occurred, to put any but the worst construction, that of ignominious betrayal, upon it, they, without further hesitation, assembled their clansmen and departed whence they had come.

Failure of Akbar.

Aurangzeb had triumphed, and when Akbar awoke on the following morning, after sleeping heavily all night, fully refreshed and eager to embark on the great struggle which was to confirm him upon the throne, he found that all that was left of the great army which had surrounded him, only a few hours earlier, were 350 personal retainers. His father's position, on the other hand, was enormously strengthened by the arrival at that moment of a large army from the Deccan, under the command of his second son, Shah Alam.[1]

Seeing no hope of retrieving their fortunes, Akbar and his slender following, despair at their hearts, fled aimlessly in the direction of the Maharana's kingdom, and after two days' incessant riding were, to their intense surprise and relief, rejoined by Durga Das and his Rathors, who had by

[1] The title conferred by the Emperor on Mohammed Muazzam.

that time discovered the deception of which they had been victims, and safely escorted the fugitives to Mewar. The Maharana Jai Singh cordially invited the Prince to look upon Mewar as his future domicile, but Akbar felt that the country, being already occupied in parts by the Emperor's forces, could not be a safe refuge, and in his extremity turned to Durga Das for advice. The Rathor chief unhesitatingly recommended him to seek shelter with King Sambhaji in Maharashtra, and pledged himself personally to conduct him there. Prince Akbar, before definitely agreeing to this, begged Durga Das to allow his children, a son named Buland Akhtar and a daughter Safiyat-un-Nisa, both of very tender age, who had hitherto accompanied him on his campaign, to remain under Rathor protection, as he feared the long and trying journey to the Deccan for them.

The warm-hearted chief not only immediately undertook that the two children should henceforth be a sacred charge to every Rathor, but made arrangements, before leaving for the Deccan, to obtain for Akbar's young daughter the services of a lady teacher learned in the Koran, who was of the class employed by the Moghul princes and nobles to conduct the religious education of their daughters, to instruct her in the doctrines of Mohammed.

The transit to Maharashtra was not made without a series of hairbreadth escapes, but finally, escorted by Durga Das and 500 Rathor horsemen, Prince Akbar arrived at the fortress of Panhala, where Sambhaji and his court were then in residence. The Mahratta king received his guest most warmly and placed a spacious mansion in the adjacent town of Parli at his disposal; and the Prince took up his abode there, prepared to await further events and to keep the strictest watch for any possible chance which might help him in his struggle for the imperial throne. With the arrival of Akbar at the Mahratta court, the curtain descends upon the first act of the drama of Aurangzeb's reign. For the opening of the second and final act the scene shifts to the Deccan.

Aurangzeb transfers the seat of Government to the Deccan.

By harbouring at his court a Moghul prince who aspired to the imperial throne, Sambhaji, ruler of a kingdom based on a foundation of militant Hindu nationalism, now saw a welcome opportunity to play his part in the politics of Delhi; and Akbar, in addition to the protection of the Mahratta king, could look with confidence for assistance to the Kings of Bijapur and Golconda, whom he knew to be both at heart bitterly hostile to Aurangzeb.

The Emperor was, therefore, faced with grave problems, but with characteristic energy he determined to deal with them in person by transferring the court, the entire machinery of government and the greater part of the army from the north of India to the Deccan.

Peace with Mewar.

In order to carry this move into effect, Aurangzeb was reluctantly obliged to offer terms of peace to Maharana Jai Singh, as he could not, simultaneously with such a far-reaching change, continue his efforts for the complete overthrow of the Rajputs. Marwar was for the moment held in subjection, but the power of Mewar was practically unbroken. The treaty to which Aurangzeb and Maharana Jai Singh appended their signatures brought additional territory under the direct administration of the Moghuls, but at the same time marked the definite failure of the Emperor's Jehad against the Hindus of Rajputana, for the three districts of Mewar ceded to him by the Maharana were conditional upon Aurangzeb's taking their revenues in place of the poll-tax; and upon his also pledging himself, as soon as Ajit Singh reached the proper age, to place him on the throne of Jodhpur. A final condition, to which the Emperor was compelled to agree, demanded the evacuation of Mewar by the imperial forces.

Peace was ratified on June 14, 1681, and on September 8 the Emperor, his second son, Shah Alam, his entire court and a very large army left Ajmere for the Deccan. Making a lengthy halt at Burhanpur, the capital of Khandesh, Aurangzeb with his immense retinue reached Aurangabad on March 22, 1682.

The court at Aurangabad. Events in the Deccan.

The Emperor's primary reason for leading his armies to the Deccan was to break the power of Sambhaji, and in the forthcoming struggle he relied for assistance on the King of Bijapur. He had, however, entirely overlooked the fact that his bigoted policy towards the Shiah Musulmans had brought them much nearer to the Hindu victims of his oppression, and that, in consequence of this, a complete change had taken place in the relations between Maharashtra and Bijapur.

Sikandar, the ruler of the latter kingdom, though he knew that the King of Maharashtra's territory had been to a great extent wrested from the house of Adil Shah, far from regretting this, looked upon the existence of a powerful Mahratta state as the best possible safeguard for his own dominions. When Aurangzeb's demand for assistance reached him, Sikandar replied in evasive terms, and at the

same time wrote to Sambhaji to ask his help should he be attacked by the Moghul forces. Sikandar had been quite correct in his surmise as to what the Emperor's attitude would be if refused assistance by him, for Aurangzeb immediately altered his plans and marched against Bijapur.

From May 1682 until March 1684 a desultory kind of fighting continued between the Bijapuri and the imperial troops, but at the end of that month, Aurangzeb grew tired of these fluctuations of war and sent a peremptory message, amounting to an ultimatum, to Sikandar Adil Shah, demanding a free passage for a Moghul army through the Bijapur territories into Maharashtra. The King of Bijapur, though still in his teens, rose to the occasion, and with remarkable courage in one so young, flatly refused his assistance either directly or indirectly to the Emperor, and, what was more, made a counter demand to the effect that every Moghul soldier should be withdrawn from within the boundaries of his kingdom. Needless to say Aurangzeb did not accede to this request, but spent the best part of another year in bringing his armies up to great strength, and at the end of March 1685, with the added equipment of a train of powerful heavy artillery, moved forward with the intention of laying siege to the city of Bijapur.

Siege of Bijapur.

Surrounded by mighty walls twenty feet deep and fifty feet high, Bijapur was considered throughout the Deccan a wellnigh impregnable fortress, but all this was unavailing in warding off the blow, for the simple reason that Sikandar himself, though gallant and able, was too young and inexperienced to cope with the great difficulty caused by the perpetual feuds between the Deccani nobles and those of foreign extraction. These quarrels had brought about the downfall of the Bahmani and Nizam Shahi kingdoms, and were also to prove fatal to the house of Adil Shah. The young sovereign no longer possessed the great armies which had formerly made such redoubtable enemies of the kings of Bijapur ; they had disappeared midst the constant civil wars and recurrent revolutions which had been waged almost unceasingly during Sikandar Adil Shah's long minority, and he now realised that his only chance of resistance lay in concentrating all his forces upon the defence of the capital.

Sambhaji whole-heartedly supported Sikandar's cause by sending two separate Mahratta armies, one to assist in protecting the city of Bijapur, the other, commanded by Hambir Rao Mohite, and composed entirely of cavalry, to raid the Moghul communications.

Sharza Khan, the greatest soldier in his service, was appointed by the King head of the Bijapur garrison and received reinforcements from Abul Hasan Kutub Shah, of Golconda, who sent a contingent of troops, as also from Raja Pam Nayak, a loyal vassal of the Adil Shahs, who joined the garrison with a force of his Berad aborigines from Kanara.

Aurangzeb's army reached the gates of Bijapur on April 1, 1685, and immediately besieged the city from all sides, and in the month of May the Emperor took up his residence at the town of Sholapur, not far distant, in order to be able to direct the operations in person.

Knowing that their all was at stake, the Bijapuris fought with the heroism of despair, and for fifteen months the city held out in spite of a constant bombardment and almost unprecedented hardships. Aurangzeb, tiring of the delay, proceeded himself to the Moghul camp and gave orders to fill the deep moat which surrounded the city walls with clay in order to facilitate an assault. The carrying out of this command was rendered impossible by Pam Nayak's Berad musketeers, who subjected the soldiers employed upon the task to a withering fire from their matchlocks. The Emperor, however, would not be deterred from his plan by apparent failure. Mounting his charger and attended by a small party of officers, he rode through the Moghul lines to the very edge of the moat, where he was instantly met with a volley of bullets from the marksmen on the walls. Several of his officers fell, and Aurangzeb himself was exposed to deadly peril, but, with that fatalism which was part of the religion which he professed, he preserved the utmost calm, in the sure conviction that his hour had not yet come and that it was not the will of Allah that he should on this occasion meet his death. The Emperor's courage and dogged pertinacity at length convinced the garrison that he would never abandon the struggle and that consequently further resistance was useless, and on September 10, 1686, Sharza Khan sought an audience with Aurangzeb, and in the name of his young sovereign offered unconditional surrender.

Surrender of Bijapur. Fall of the Adil Shahi dynasty.

On September 12, the great dynasty, so romantically founded two centuries earlier, ceased to exist, for on that day Sikandar Adil Shah, passing through the streets of his beautiful capital for the last time on his way to the Moghul camp, received the silent homage of the people who had ceased to be his subjects. He was ushered into the Shamiana (audience tent) where the Emperor, seated upon his throne,

awaited him, but the royal captive, whilst making his obeisance, betrayed not the slightest trace of fear or of servility. Aurangzeb seemed for the moment impressed by his youth and dignified bearing, and, addressing Sikandar in kindly tones, assured him of his protection; but any touch of gentleness was but a passing impulse in the Emperor's nature. Though the fate apportioned to the deposed King was less cruel than that suffered by the majority of those who had defied imperial authority, Sikandar Adil Shah was doomed to spend the greater part of his life in captivity on the Rock of Daulatabad, where he died at the early age of thirty-two years.

A week after the surrender of Bijapur, the Emperor made his triumphal entry and proceeded to the great mosque, there to offer up thanksgivings for his victory and to substitute his name in the Khutba for that of Sikandar Adil Shah.

Invasion of Golconda.

Simultaneously with the campaign against Bijapur, an imperial army, under the command of Shah Alam, had in July 1685, by order of the Emperor, been despatched to invade the King of Golconda's dominions. Aurangzeb's desire to crush the power of Abul Hasan Kutub Shah was due less to the fact that the latter had rendered assistance to Sikandar in the defence of Bijapur than to his friendship towards the Hindus, as exemplified by the still existing alliance between his country and Maharashtra, and by the elevation of Madanna Pant, the Brahmin, to the Wazirat of the Kutub Shahi state.

Shah Alam, as he advanced into Golconda, found his progress barred near the town of Malkhed by a large Kutub Shahi army under the command of Mir Mohammed Ibrahim, a leading noble of the court, who was accompanied by Rustam Rao, nephew of the Wazir, as one of his subordinate officers. After some fighting, in which Rustam Rao was wounded, but which brought about no decisive issue, night-fall caused a lull in the battle, and with the dawn of another day, Shah Alam, emerging from his tent, was surprised to find that all enemy troops had withdrawn. Mohammed Ibrahim, a traitor at heart, felt that, however bravely defended, Golconda could not permanently resist the great Moghul army and had decided to seek favour with the Emperor by the betrayal of his own sovereign. Shah Alam's advance continued without further interruption to Hyderabad, where he found that Abul Hasan Kutub Shah and his court had already sought refuge behind the ramparts of the fortress of Golconda.

Occupation of Hyderabad. Siege of Golconda.

The Moghul army occupied the city and Shah Alam set up his residence in one of the royal palaces whence, in the Emperor's name, he dictated terms of peace to the King. These terms, of a very stern nature, demanded the cession of the districts of Malkhed and of Serum, the payment of an enormous war indemnity and, finally, the dismissal from office of Madanna Pant and his relatives.

With his capital in the hands of the enemy, Abul Hasan had no choice but to accept these terms, and Shah Alam withdrew to a point some forty-eight miles from Hyderabad, there to await the carrying out of the conditions of the settlement. The King of Golconda made over the territory demanded of him and paid the exorbitant ransom into the imperial treasury, but when it came to the final clause of the treaty, the dismissal of the minister whose unswerving loyalty and great wisdom had been placed whole-heartedly at his disposal, almost from the day of his accession to the throne, his heart rebelled and he delayed taking the step to which he was pledged. The King, had he but known, was dooming his faithful servant to a far more cruel fate. The elevation of a Hindu to the highest office of state had, from the first, aroused the jealousy and ill-will of the Musulman nobles of Golconda, and the minister had, in addition, for some unknown reason incurred the enmity of the widows of the late King Abdullah, who, in spite of their life of seclusion, exercised a powerful influence at court. Fostered by them, a conspiracy was formed which resulted in the murder, during the month of March 1686, of the Wazir and his brother Akanna in the streets of Hyderabad. Rustam Rao, Golconda's bravest and most accomplished soldier, was attacked and killed in his own house, and the heads of all three victims were sent by the Queen Dowager, Saruma Begum, to Aurangzeb, in the hope that this ghastly peace-offering would conciliate him and prevent him from taking further steps towards the subjugation of Golconda.

The Emperor, however, had never looked upon the treaty with Abul Hasan as binding ; his intention was to break it as soon as the operations against Bijapur had been brought to a successful conclusion. The fall of the Adil Shahi kingdom now released the imperial forces and Aurangzeb, on January 28, 1687, advanced at the head of a powerful army to lay siege to the fortress of Golconda. For five months the great stronghold withstood the incessant bombardment by the Moghul guns without its mighty walls sustaining a breach, until, realising the futility of a continuance of this

method, Aurangzeb, on the night of May 16, gave orders for a surprise attack. The Moghul storming column, under the command of a distinguished officer named Firoz Jang, moved silently towards the outer wall, and the general with his own hands fastened a rope ladder on the spot from which two Moghul soldiers were to make the ascent. On reaching the ramparts, they found the Kutub Shahi sentinels asleep at their posts and all seemed favourable to the attempt. An incident, trivial in itself, but of those which have often been known to turn the tides of fate, brought about a complete failure. A pariah dog prowling about on the parapet in search of some scraps of food, startled by the stealthy movements of the Moghul soldiers, raised a loud bark, which instantly awoke the troops of the garrison. Rushing to the battlements, they succeeded, within a brief space, in inflicting heavy losses upon their Moghul assailants and driving them back to their own camp. On the following morning Abul Hasan, in public durbar and in the presence of his entire court, bestowed a silken coat, a jewelled collar and a title of nobility upon the half-starved hound who had undoubtedly for the moment saved the fortress from the enemy attack.

Fall of Golconda fortress and of the Kutub Shahi dynasty.

The siege of Golconda continued until September of that year, when the traitorous act of one of its defenders sealed the doom of the great stronghold, and with it, that of the Kutub Shahi dynasty. This man, a captain of Afghan mercenaries named Sirdar Khan, on the night of September 21 opened a postern gate and admitted the Moghul army into the precincts of the fort. For months past Aurangzeb had employed secret agents to bribe the officers of the garrison with offers of great riches and high rank in the imperial service, in order to induce them to abandon the Kutub Shahi cause ; and many had succumbed to the temptation, but there remained one true and faithful servant of the dynasty, a tried military leader named Abdur Razzak Lari. To him the Emperor made the almost unprecedented offer of the dignity of a commander of 6000. In accents of withering scorn, the officer replied : " I would rather be ranked among the 72 faithful companions who perished with the Khalif Hasan at Kerbela than with the 22,000 traitors who overcame him ".[1]

The stream of enemy soldiers continued to pour into the fortress by that postern gate, and had almost reached the entrance to the palace, when Abdur Razzak, brave in action

[1] Jadunath Sarkar, *History of Aurangzib*, chap. xlvii. p. 383.

as in speech, charged into their midst on a steed which he had not even stopped to saddle, the inspiring words issuing loudly from his lips : " While I live there will be at least one life sacrificed in defence of Abul Hasan ".[1]

Alone this hero fought an army until, wounded in no fewer than seventy places, he sank to the ground, but so greatly were the Moghuls impressed by his courage that they carried him to their camp as gently as they could, and he was nursed back to health by the Emperor's physicians.

The King of Golconda, as he listened to the enemy's shouts of triumph increasing in volume, knew that his country's hour of doom had come. Clothed in his robes of state, he seated himself on the throne in the Hall of Audience, and commanded his nautch girls to dance to him. When the soldiers actually burst into the hall, the frightened girls ceased their rhythmical movements, but Abul Hasan smilingly bade them continue, with these words : " Go on dancing as before, every minute that I can spend in pleasure is a great gain ".[2] Abul Hasan Kutub Shah now passed from the light of a throne to the dim confines of the fortress of Daulatabad, where he spent the remainder of his life as Aurangzeb's state prisoner, and the great Kingdom of Golconda was merged into the empire.

War renewed with Maharashtra.

The only independent kingdom now remaining in the Deccan was that which had been founded by the genius of Sivaji, and it was upon this kingdom, Maharashtra, that Aurangzeb's insatiable desire for conquest centred in its final struggle for Moghul supremacy in Western India.

Many of the able Brahmin statesmen and brilliant Mahratta soldiers who had shared Sivaji's rise to power still survived and were willing to serve his son ; the armies of Maharashtra were unbroken, her treasury well filled ; the danger which threatened the young state lay in the personality of her sovereign, who, though unquestionably brave, possessed none of the many other great qualities which had distinguished his father.

Character of Sambhaji.

Dissolute and unrestrained, Sambhaji was also habitually intemperate, and when under the influence of drink his vindictiveness and cruelty, always dominant features in his character, were ruthlessly vented upon any one attempting to oppose him.

The founder of the Mahratta kingdom had left a younger

[1] Jadunath Sarkar, *History of Aurangzib*, chap. xlvii. p. 383.
[2] *Ibid.* pp. 385-386.

son named Rajaram, his child by his third wife, Soyerabai, of the noble house of Shirke. This youth was nineteen at the time of his father's death and already gave promise of qualities more fitted to a ruler than those possessed by his elder brother. Under these circumstances it was very natural that there should be a strong party amongst the late king's ministers who, having already had proof of Sambhaji's shortcomings, planned to pass him over in favour of Rajaram. The conspiracy ended in complete failure, owing partly to the strong position taken up by Sambhaji himself, and partly to the attitude of the bulk of his father's comrades in arms, who considered it sacrilege to go against the deceased sovereign's will, which vested the succession in his eldest son.

Sambhaji signalised his accession by a series of atrocities which sent a thrill of horror through the length and breadth of his kingdom. Rajaram escaped death through the intercession of Sambhaji's gentle wife, Yesubai, who was much attached to him, but the young prince's mother, Soyerabai, suffered the inhuman fate of being walled up alive in the bricks of her own house. Her entire clan, the Shirkes, were publicly declared outlaws and as many of its male scions as could be seized were, by the King's orders, executed in the most barbarous manner. The horrors perpetrated upon their relatives completely killed, for the time being, all national sentiment in the hearts of the survivors, whose every thought cried out for vengeance at whatever cost; and, seeking refuge at Aurangabad, they unhesitatingly offered their services to the Emperor in his coming struggle against Maharashtra.

Aurangzeb invades Maharashtra.

Sambhaji, deaf to the protests of the able Mahratta ministers who had so faithfully served his father, and who begged him to adopt a more lenient policy, practically dismissed them from office and, giving himself up to a life of debauch, entrusted the entire administration of his kingdom to his evil genius, a Northern Brahmin named Kulesha, formerly priest to the Bhonsle family at Allahabad.

On December 14, 1688, the Emperor led his armies into Maharashtra, and within less than a month had gained possession of some of the most notable fortresses in the country.

Regardless of the plight of his kingdom, the King continued his life of pleasure at Raigarh, and towards the end of January left the fortress for the small town of Sangameshwar, twenty-two miles from the city of Ratnagiri.

Shaikh Nizam Hyderabadi, a skilful soldier, had been one of the Deccani nobles who had deserted to the imperial side on the eve of the fall of Golconda, and he was now sent by Aurangzeb to lay siege to the fortress of Panhala. Soon after his arrival there news reached him by his spies that Sambhaji, accompanied by the Brahmin Kulesha, and protected only by a force of 4000 Mahratta spearmen, had taken up his residence at Sangameshwar. Without a moment's hesitation, Shaikh Nizam gathered together a force of cavalry and, abandoning Panhala, reached Sangameshwar three days later. The invaders entered the town without encountering any resistance, but when they approached the Mahratta king's dwelling, his bodyguard, led by Kulesha, who, in spite of all his faults, was a brave man, did their utmost to defend him. The Brahmin was severely wounded almost immediately and forced to dismount, and his soldiers, stricken with panic, turned and fled.

Shaikh Nizam and his men now made their way into the mansion as far as the zenana, where they found the unworthy heir of the great Sivaji just awakening from a drunken slumber. The King and the wounded Kulesha were, by order of Shaikh Nizam, put in heavy chains and placed upon elephants, and thus conveyed by the triumphant Moghul commander to the Emperor's camp at Akluj, about eighty-five miles from Bijapur.

Capture and death of Sambhaji.

A few days later Aurangzeb transferred his camp to Tulapur, sixteen miles from Poona, and here, in the very heart of Maharashtra, the second of her kings, as though to add to the poignancy of the tragedy, met a terrible death. Dressed as buffoons, carrying rattles in their hands and chained to camels, which were decorated with bells, Sambhaji and his favourite had to run the gauntlet of the Moghul camp, after which they were brought into the Emperor's presence and given by him the choice of Islam or death. Sambhaji, with a remnant of dignity and regardless of the consequences, replied to the effect that he would accept the faith of the Prophet on the day when the Emperor would bestow upon him his daughter's hand in marriage.

Aroused to a frenzy of vindictiveness by this mocking defiance, Aurangzeb commanded forthwith that in his own presence and that of the entire court Sambhaji and Kulesha should be blinded and their tongues cut out, finally sentencing them to decapitation. Their heads were paraded as trophies in each of the Deccan cities by turn and their bodies thrown as food to the pariah dogs who infested the imperial camp.

No sooner had Sambhaji's terrible fate become known at Raigarh than a council was summoned of all the leading soldiers and statesmen of Maharashtra to discuss the question of the succession. It was by general opinion considered most dangerous, in view of the imminent peril threatening the kingdom, to place a child upon the throne, so that, although the King had left an infant son named Sivaji, who was the rightful heir, the council decided immediately to release from imprisonment, where he had been kept ever since Sambhaji's accession, his half-brother Rajaram, now twenty-nine years of age, and offer him the sceptre of Maharashtra. The chivalrous young Prince, recollecting the debt of gratitude he owed to Yesubai for having pleaded for his life with the King, would not entertain the idea of supplanting her child upon the throne, but in the end the Rani herself suggested the solution. She proposed that Sivaji should be king, but that Rajaram should act as regent, and this compromise was warmly acclaimed by all.

Rajaram regent of Maharashtra.

Rajaram hereupon addressed the assembly in stirring words, appealing to his listeners to help him with all their will and strength in the sacred fight for the freedom of their country. Letting his eyes wander to where Yesubai sat with her child upon her knees, he loudly spoke the following words :

" I am but the prince's servant ; you must, it is true, give me your obedience, but your loyalty and devotion you must keep for my master." [1]

The Emperor meanwhile remained at Tulapur, there to complete his preparations for an advance on Raigarh. One of the most renowned and spirited cavalry leaders in the Mahratta army, Santaji Ghorpade by name, being fully aware of Aurangzeb's intentions, proposed to Rajaram that he should be permitted to take command of 2000 horsemen and that, with this small force, he should raid the imperial camp and make an attempt to get possession of the Emperor's person, living or dead, and thus free Maharashtra from the tyrant for all time. The regent consented, and Santaji with his intrepid little band set out on their perilous adventure. When within a few miles of Tulapur, they were challenged by a large force of Aurangzeb's cavalry, but Santaji, equal to the occasion, called out that he and his men were retainers of one of the Shirke nobles who had deserted to the Emperor, and, completely reassured, the

[1] Kincaid and Parasnis, *A History of the Maratha People*, vol. ii. chap. xxix. p. 63.

Moghuls allowed them to pass. When, shortly before dawn, the raiders reached the outskirts of the encampment, they found the Moghul sentries asleep, and without further hesitation Santaji and his horsemen charged full towards the scarlet-draped enclosure occupied by the Emperor. Mercilessly cutting their way through the soldiers who attempted to bar their progress, they forced an entry into the imperial sleeping tent, but here disappointment awaited them. Wary in this as in all things, Aurangzeb never slept in the same tent for two consecutive nights, and his would-be assailants found it empty. The alarm had now been given and Santaji's only chance of escape for himself and his men was to ride back with all speed to Panhala, but even in their desperate plight they managed to carry with them the golden tops off the Emperor's tent poles, as trophies to Rajaram at his headquarters.

The effect of this raid was, if possible, to strengthen Aurangzeb's determination to strike at Raigarh, the heart of Maharashtra and the city which sheltered the infant sovereign. The fortress had for some time been undergoing a desultory kind of siege by a Moghul force under the command of Itikad Khan, son of the Emperor's Wazir, Asad Khan, but it was not the accepted methods of warfare which were to bring the great stronghold to its doom ; treachery, fostered by the evil influence of Sambhaji's reign, had found its way even to the ranks of the Mahratta officers.

Surrender of Raigarh. Capture of the child king.

The governorship of Raigarh was held by a chieftain named Suryaji Pisal, who claimed to be the rightful Deshmukh or Hereditary Revenue Collector of the small town and district of Wai. This man now sent a message to Itikad Khan in which he undertook, if the Emperor would promise to acknowledge his claim, to betray the fortress and its royal occupants into the hands of their enemies. The Moghul commander gave the undertaking in Aurangzeb's name, and on October 19, 1689, Suryaji Pisal threw open the gates of Raigarh and surrendered the Queen and her child to the imperial forces. Yesubai and the little king were conveyed to the Emperor's camp by Itikad, and Aurangzeb at once gave orders that the child should be taken to the imperial harem and there brought up in the Islamic faith.

At that period the harem was presided over by the Emperor's second unmarried daughter, Zinat-un-Nisa, who bore the title of Begum Sahib or Princess Royal. Zinat-un-Nisa, who was given charge of Sambhaji's infant son, was

now a woman of mature years and saddened by much that she had lived to see, but at heart she still remained that same ardent romantic girl who, with her face pressed close to the marble lattice of the Diwan-i-Am at Agra, had gazed with admiring eyes upon the slim figure of Sivaji, the future King of Maharashtra, as he passed through the lines of assembled nobles to make his obeisance to her father. As she gazed upon his grandson, who bore her hero's name and who, by a strange fate, had now been committed to her care, an irresistible impulse came upon her to plead with Aurangzeb not to wrong this innocent child by bringing him up in an alien faith. For the only time on record in a life so devoid of kindly actions, Aurangzeb yielded to a gentler emotion and promised his daughter, who knelt at his feet, that he would not enforce Islam upon this child, but would accept in his place as a convert to the Musulman creed a faithful servant of the young king, named Khandoji Gujar.

In due course the Emperor, who distrusted all men and gave no proof of affection to any of his own sons, came to love, as far as love could find its way to his stony heart, this child of an enemy to whom he had meted out such a barbarous death. As the boy grew older he liked to have him by his side and called him Sahu, or "the good one", which gradually superseded his real name of Sivaji. Zinat-un-Nisa adopted Yesubai as her sister and the Rani permanently dwelt with the Princess Royal in the imperial harem.

The fact that Aurangzeb had shown clemency in regard to Sahu in no way affected his determination to pursue his policy of ruthlessness in Maharashtra. The fall of Raigarh was promptly followed by that of Panhala, from which fortress the regent, however, succeeded in making good his escape to the neighbouring stronghold of Vishalgarh.

The Moghul armies continued to sweep over the country, and, but for the refuge which Sivaji's genius had provided by his conquests in Mysore and the Carnatic, where the strong walls of Jinji gave shelter to Rajaram and the Mahratta government in the darkest hour of peril, the regent and his retainers could not have permanently evaded capture, and Mahratta independence must have been inevitably doomed.

Mahratta government transferred to Jinji.

Rajaram, fully alive to the risk, were his presence in the fortress of Vishalgarh to become known, appointed his Minister of Finance, a Brahmin named Ramchandra Bavdekar and a very able man, as his representative in

Maharashtra, and during the month of April 1690 he himself and a few of his officers, disguised as religious mendicants, slipped out of the gates of the fortress and, under cover of night, started for Jinji, which they reached in safety. He was received at the great Carnatic stronghold by Harji Mahadik, successor to Raghunath Narayan Hanumante in the viceroyalty of the Mahratta conquests in the South; and Rajaram's cousin Shahaji, who had become Raja of Tanjore on the death of his father, Vyankoji, promised him his support in the forthcoming struggle.

The removal of the Mahratta government to Jinji of course became known at the imperial court and, not content with his occupation of the Deccan territories, Aurangzeb resolved to attempt the complete overthrow of the Mahrattas as an organised power by an invasion of the South on a very extensive scale.

Moghul advance into the Carnatic. Siege of Jinji.

This formidable task was given to Itikad Khan, the captor of Raigarh, now raised to higher rank by the title of Zulfikar Khan. By September of that same year the Moghul general had completed his preparations and, heading a large army, advanced in rapid stages to the Carnatic, and installed his siege batteries outside the walls of Jinji.

Events in Rajputana.

The Emperor remained in the Deccan, partly because he was beginning to feel the weight of years, and very largely because events of importance in Rajputana claimed his attention.

After his flight to Maharashtra in 1681, Prince Mohammed Akbar had remained for five years at the court of Sambhaji, but at the end of that period, tiring of the unstable character of the Mahratta king, and convinced that it would be futile to rely upon any practical help from him in the realisation of the dream he still cherished of winning the imperial throne, he embarked on an English ship at Rajapur bound for Muskat, and sought refuge in Persia.

The Prince's enforced exile in Maharashtra had been shared by his staunch ally, Durga Das Rathor, who, however, although he knew the interests of Marwar to be in trustworthy hands, was happy when Akbar's departure in 1686 left him free to return to his own country.

The heroic struggle on behalf of the child Ajit, whose very name was known only to a few of them, had been continued by the Rathor chiefs until close upon the time of their leader's return from the Deccan. Their firm belief that, when the hour had come, the Dhani (Lord), their rightful king, would appear amongst them from his place of

refuge and rule over Marwar, had upheld their courage, although the Moghul banner floated from their castles and their estates had been seized by their foes.

Shortly before Durga Das' reappearance, the Rathor nobles felt an overwhelming desire to behold their unknown sovereign, and, proceeding in a body to Mukund Singh Khichi, the chief left in charge of affairs by Durga Das, they begged him to bring the Prince from his place of retirement. One of the chiefs, who acted as spokesman, exclaimed in passionate accents : " Without sight of our Lord, bread and water have no flavour ".[1]

Ajit Singh presented to the Marwar nobles.

Mukund Singh was at first reluctant to assume so great a responsibility without instructions from Durga Das, but finally he was unable to resist their continued supplications, and, mounting his horse, guided the feudatories of Marwar to Mount Abu, where Ajit Singh still continued to reside under the Jain abbot's protection. Mukund Singh now revealed to the young Prince the secret of his birth and the high destiny to which he had a right to aspire. The humble garments and staff of the ascetic were cast aside, and, robed in the quilted coat of the Rajput, and carrying the warrior's sword, Ajit Singh, Maharaja of Marwar, was acclaimed with shouts of enthusiasm by the Rathor Thakurs.

Durga Das found on his return that his young sovereign had already taken part in a raid against the Moghuls, and for the next four years, until 1690, the Rathors pursued with redoubled keenness their spirited fight for the independence of their country.

Aurangzeb, whilst actively preparing for his campaign in the Carnatic, at this moment suddenly recollected that Akbar's young son and daughter were still in Marwar under the protection of Durga Das. Trusting no man to perform his duty loyally, the Emperor felt convinced that the thirteen-year-old Princess Safiyat-un-Nisa, brought up amongst infidels, had been kept in complete ignorance of her true religion. He sent word, therefore, to Shuj'at Khan, his Governor in Marwar, to negotiate with Durga Das for the Princess's visit to the imperial court. Shuj'at Khan approached Durga Das through a personal friend of the Rathor chiefs, a Brahmin named Ishwar Das Nagar, and succeeded in his demand without any further difficulty. The Princess travelled to Jodhpur under a flag of truce, and thence, by easy stages, to Aurangzeb's court in the Deccan.

Safiyat-un-Nisa was kindly welcomed by her grandfather,

[1] Tod, *Rajasthan*, vol. ii. p. 55.

who informed her almost immediately that his first duty would be to see that she received the fullest Moslem religious teaching. The Emperor could not hide his surprise when the young Princess smilingly assured him that she was already fully versed in the Koran. For the first time Durga Das' irreproachable sense of honour and chivalrous regard for the spiritual needs of the Musulman child entrusted to his care stood revealed to Aurangzeb, and, stirred by the Hindu's respect for an alien faith, he exclaimed : " Tell me what reward Durga Das wants ".[1]

To this the Princess replied that Ishwar Das, who had escorted her to the Deccan, would be able to give him the information he desired. Aurangzeb sent for the Brahmin, who told him that now, as in the past, the Rathor leader's only wish was to see the accession of Ajit Singh to the throne of Marwar. The Emperor, though he may have been actuated by a genuine feeling of gratitude towards Durga Das, had another very important reason in desiring to conciliate him.

Akbar's son, Buland Akhtar, still dwelt in Marwar and, though brought up as a Musulman, was at heart far more of a Rajput ; and the Emperor could not rid himself of the haunting fear that at some future time the young Prince might, with Rajput support, make a bid for the imperial throne.

He sent Ishwar Das to Marwar to open peace negotiations with the Rathors, but though eventually an agreement was reached, the discussions occupied fully eight years, and the treaty was not signed until the year 1698. Immediately after this event Durga Das escorted Prince Buland Akhtar to Islampuri, near Pandharpur, where the Emperor and his court were then in residence. The Rathor chief, himself straight and correct in all things, did homage to Aurangzeb, but the Emperor, as usual, when dealing with the Rajputs, lacked generosity and failed in his obligations.

The entire kingdom of Marwar was not restored to Ajit Singh ; he merely received the three districts of Jhalore, Sanchod and Siwana. Durga Das was given the district of Merta in Marwar as his *jagir*, but, by appointing him military governor of Patan in Gujarat, Aurangzeb deprived the new king of his valuable assistance. A peace concluded on these lines could not be of lasting duration, and within three years the struggle was renewed, and raged practically without a break until the Emperor's death.

[1] Jadunath Sarkar, *History of Aurangzib*, vol. v. chap. lviii. p. 283.

The years 1690–1698, during which the negotiations in Rajputana were in course of progress, brought but little apparent change in the military situation in the Carnatic, but in point of fact great events were in preparation.

Moghul campaign in the Carnatic. Strange position at Jinji.

Zulfikar Khan, the general in command of the imperial forces at Jinji, soon arrived at the conclusion that his siege guns were making but little impression upon the massive walls of the great fortress. He began to realise that the Emperor was growing old and foresaw, as did many of the *Mansabdars*, that his death, which could not be so very long delayed, would most probably be followed by the break-up of the empire. With this idea in his mind, he conceived the plan of founding an independent Musulman kingdom in the Carnatic, a plan which made it advisable for him to continue in the South if possible until the Emperor's demise.

Zulfikar Khan made a secret proposal to Rajaram that, whilst nominally continuing the siege of Jinji, he should actually leave the garrison unmolested, a suggestion which the Mahratta regent naturally accepted, as it was a guarantee of safety and gave him a chance to communicate with Ramchandra Bavdekar, his representative in the Deccan.

From that time onwards Rajaram devoted himself with untiring energy to organising a counter-offensive which, when the moment was propitious, should drive the Moghul army out of Maharashtra. Santaji Ghorpade and another cavalry leader of great repute named Dhanaji Jadhav were posted to the Deccan to help Ramchandra Bavdekar in his task, not only of keeping the spirit of resistance alive amongst the population, but also in raising fresh recruits for the coming struggle. In the Carnatic the regent himself was supplied with troops by his cousin, Shahaji of Tanjore.

For close on eight years the opposing parties were able to keep up the comedy of the siege of Jinji, but in December 1697 the Emperor, infuriated by the delay, informed Zulfikar Khan through his father, the Wazir, that if the fortress were not immediately captured he would be recalled.

This message brought consternation both to the Moghul general and to Rajaram, but a possible way out of the difficulty was suggested by Khando Ballal, the regent's devoted secretary, who proposed that the fortress should be surrendered to Zulfikar Khan on the undertaking that Rajaram should first be allowed to effect his escape.

Zulfikar Khan having promptly agreed to this, the services of two brothers, named respectively Ramoji and Ganoji, were enlisted, who promised to give every possible

help to Rajaram in his flight to Maharashtra. The brothers, who belonged to the Shirke family and were serving as officers in the Moghul commander's army, had been amongst those who joined the Emperor's forces in order to avenge the terrible death which Sambhaji, the late ruler of Maharashtra, had meted out to their kinswoman, Soyerabai. The fact that the son of this unfortunate victim now held the regency of the Mahratta kingdom very naturally aroused the desire in them to ensure his safety.

Another Mahratta officer serving in the imperial army, named Nagoji Mane, commander of 5000 cavalry, joined the Shirkes and between them they arranged that Nagoji Mane and his horsemen, who were posted outside the western gate of Jinji, should make pretence at a preliminary attack upon the fortress. Accordingly, under cover of night, Nagoji and his men started the attack, accompanying it with as much noise as possible, and when the tumult was at its highest, Rajaram escaped through the western gate and hastened to that portion of the imperial camp occupied by the Shirke brothers.

He remained there until next morning, when Ganoji Shirke announced to all that he proposed to enliven the tedium of the siege by an improvised hunting expedition. Rajaram, disguised as a groom, accompanied the huntsmen and, having got beyond the confines of the Moghul camp, they galloped at full speed until, at approximately fifteen miles distant from Jinji, they were met by a large body of Mahratta cavalry under the command of Dhanaji Jadhav. Escorted by his troops, the Regent proceeded to Vellore, and, after a brief halt, advanced rapidly into his own country.

Escape of Rajaram. Surrender of Jinji.

Within a few days the fortress of Jinji fell, but this victory, though apparently an imperial one, in point of fact spelt disaster for the Moghuls and sounded the hour of deliverance for the sorely tried people of Maharashtra. Rajaram immediately conferred with his trusted servant Ramchandra Bavdekar, and messengers were sent off on swift horses throughout the country to call the people to arms. The hardy ryots of the Dhangar or shepherd caste flocked in thousands to the regent's standard and large contingents of Mahratta horse joined with their customary lightning rapidity.

Mahratta counter-offensive. Triumph of Rajaram.

All was now prepared and, early in the year 1699, Rajaram, at the head of 60,000 men, took the offensive against the Moghuls. The small imperial garrisons in occupation of the

Mahratta towns were totally unprepared for the attack and now found themselves overwhelmed by the powerful forces of the Regent. Poona, the holy city of Nasik, and the entire Godavari valley fell into the hands of the triumphant Mahrattas, who pressed on untiringly till they entered the Moghul Deccan and completed their victory by the conquest of Khandesh and Berar.

Death of Rajaram.

The reconquest of Maharashtra is generally assumed to have occupied the period of a year and three months approximately. The final stage was marked by the death of the brilliant leader whose dauntless spirit had inspired the Mahrattas to make the supreme effort, and his loss in the hour of victory was a terrible one.

The wearing anxieties of the preceding years, followed by the hardships of the campaign, caused an affection of the lungs, which had first shown itself during the siege of Jinji, suddenly to become acute, and on March 5, 1700, Rajaram passed away, still in the prime of life, at the fort of Singhgarh. His last words to his ministers were a solemn injunction to them to acknowledge no king but Sahu, the lawful heir, and never to relinquish their swords until every inch of Mahratta ground had been freed from the Moghuls.

Scarcely had the regent been laid to rest than the ministers of the Mahratta kingdom began to discuss amongst themselves the great difficulties and disadvantages of assuming the government in the name of a sovereign who still remained at the Emperor's court. Reason in this case outweighed loyalty to the rightful heir and to the dying wishes of the liberator of their country.

Disputed succession in Maharashtra.

Rajaram had left two legitimate sons named Sivaji and Sambhaji, who, at the time of their father's death, were still quite young, but there also existed a natural son of his, named Raja Karna, by his mistress Sagunabai, who had reached manhood, and he was now proclaimed King of Maharashtra. After a reign of three weeks only, he succumbed to an attack of smallpox.

The council of ministers and army officers met once more to consider the question of the succession, but, without leaving them time to arrive at an independent decision, Tarabai, Rajaram's principal widow, gained, by the sheer strength of her personal will, their common consent to the enthronement of her infant son Sivaji, under her own regency.

Regency of Tarabai.

Her first action was to throw into prison Rajaram's other widow, Rajasbai, and her child Sambhaji, after which she

despatched an envoy to the Emperor with proposals of peace and the offer to rule Maharashtra as his vassal.

Aurangzeb, fully convinced that these overtures had been dictated by fear, replied to them with a contemptuous refusal, and at the same time made the boasting assertion to his officers that, having only a woman and child to deal with now, he would promptly crush the hated race which had defied him for so long. Aurangzeb in this estimate of the Queen Regent had made his last and greatest miscalculation, for Tarabai, daughter of the brilliant soldier Hambir Rao Mohite, was a woman born to rule. Her ambitious and ruthless nature caused much suffering and dissension in Maharashtra at a later date, but in the early days of her regency she exercised a great influence for good amongst all classes. Her firmness and never-failing optimism imbued her ministers and generals with confidence in her judgement, whilst her soldiers were inspired by her utter disregard of personal hardship and danger. She spent her life amongst them, riding for hours and hours without betraying any sign of fatigue, and habitually taking her rest on the bare ground.

Moghul offensive renewed in Maharashtra.

The Emperor, refusing to believe that the strength of the Mahrattas had greatly increased and that they no longer depended upon their strongholds to shield them from his troops, renewed his offensive in Maharashtra with dogged persistence, hoping to recapture the hill fortresses lost to Rajaram.

Tarabai, whose military talents and knowledge were equal to those of her most skilful officers, found better use for her soldiers than to lock them behind fortress walls, and she employed them in constant raids against the Moghuls, from whom they were ordered to demand the payment of *chauth*, or one-fourth of the entire revenue of whatever province they happened to be passing through at the time.

This futile attempt to regain a footing in Maharashtra was continued by Aurangzeb for the period of four years, until at last he was obliged to realise that his power was at an end and, his heart overflowing with bitterness, withdrew from the land it had been his dream to conquer, back into the Moghul Deccan.

Final triumph of the Mahrattas. Withdrawal of Aurangzeb.

His splendid army was now a demoralised rabble, and his officers made no attempt to infuse fresh spirit into the men, for they themselves had lost all interest and desired only to return to their homes in the North. The perpetual campaigns had exhausted the resources of the imperial treasury, and yet, even in face of these disastrous conditions, and

implored by his faithful Wazir, Asad Khan, to return to Delhi, the real seat of government, the Emperor insisted on another attempt to retrieve his fortunes by a renewal of his conflict in the Deccan.

After the fall of the Adil Shahi kingdom, Pam Nayak, the Berad chief of Shorapur, who had so nobly assisted in the defence of Bijapur, made his obeisance to Aurangzeb and surrendered his principal fort, Sagar, to a Moghul garrison. This act of submission on the part of the Raja was not recognised by his wild clansmen, who, angered by it, deposed him and proclaimed his nephew Pidia Nayak as chief. The new Raja established his capital on the fortified hill of Wagingera, twelve miles from Sagar, and immediately revolted against the Emperor. From this centre he joined forces with the Mahrattas, and, in union with them, carried out continuous raids in the imperial districts which had recently been conquered from Bijapur.

Aurangzeb's last campaign.

Turning a deaf ear to the appeals of his nobles and military advisers, the Emperor, towards the latter part of the year 1704, led his army against the Berads, and on February 8, 1705, opened the siege of the fortress of Wagingera. The Berads defended themselves with magnificent valour and received assistance from a Mahratta force commanded by Dhanaji Jadhav, which had taken up a position outside the walls and which created diversions by carrying out surprise attacks upon the Moghul outposts.

On April 27 the imperial forces, under the joint command of a Moghul officer named Nasrat Jang and of Dalpat Rao Bundela, Raja of Datia, succeeded, in spite of violent opposition, in occupying and holding the walled village immediately outside the gates of the fort. When, at dawn of the following day, their storming columns proceeded to the assault, they found their progress unimpeded. Complete stillness greeted them everywhere in place of the uproar they had expected, and without firing a shot the imperial troops made their entry into the great stronghold which had defied their attacks for three full months. The ramparts stood abandoned and the interior of the fort was empty of her brave defenders. They had all escaped under cover of the night, through secret tunnels hewn in the rock, to join their Mahratta allies.

Aurangzeb, victor of Dharmat and Samugarh, conqueror of Bijapur and Golconda, was forced to drink of the cup of bitter humiliation served to him by a petty chief and his small band of savage aborigines. At eighty-six years of

age, his proud spirit defeated, his heart broken by failure, the Emperor at last announced to his soldiers that it was his intention to lead them back to the plains of Northern India. His decision came too late, for almost immediately after the occupation of Wagingera Aurangzeb was attacked by fever and for several days his life was despaired of. His wonderful constitution and strength of will allowed him to rally, but all thought of his return to the North had to be definitely abandoned, and it was decided to move the court to Ahmednagar.

In the month of October of that same year, the aged sovereign, carefully borne in a palanquin, started on his journey, but a halt of forty days was made at Bahadurpur on the river Bhima for the fast of Ramazan.

On January 20, 1706, the monarch reached Ahmednagar and was installed in the fort, where he lingered for yet another year, a prey to misery and desolation. Day and night sentries paced the massive ramparts on the look-out for the Mahrattas, whose persistent raids were carried almost to the gates of the great fort.

Weakened in body, but his mind still painfully alert, Aurangzeb was doomed to realise that the great empire founded by his ancestors was breaking up, and with the hand of death, the one unconquerable foe, upon him, was bound to acknowledge that he alone was responsible for this ruin and devastation.

Triumph of the Rathors. Accession of Maharaja Ajit Singh.

The critical condition of the sovereign was known to the Moghul officials at Jodhpur and, convinced that the death of the Emperor would be followed by a collapse of all imperial authority, they were preparing for flight. Their fears were fully justified, for a very few days after Aurangzeb's demise, Ajit Singh, the infant for whom Durga Das Rathor had, thirty years previously, waged his first desperate battle on the Jumna bank, ascended the throne of his ancestors, where he was destined to rule gloriously for half a century.

Victory of Chhatrasal in Bundelkhand.

In Bundelkhand, Chhatrasal, victorious all along the line, had planted his standard on the turrets of the fortress of Kalanjar, and there now remained only the small state of Datia, under its chief, Dalpat Rao, who still acknowledged the supremacy of the Emperor.

Independent Musulman states founded.

The more ambitious Moslem nobles were preparing to guard their own interests, knowing full well that after the Emperor's death the vast dominions of the house of Timur would be within reach of whoever possessed the strongest will and the sharpest sword.

In Central India the Afghan, Dost Mohammed Khan, imperial Governor of the district of Berasia, was laying the foundations of the still existing state of Bhopal; while, in the near future, the son of Firoz Jang, the Emperor's most brilliant general, was to rule as first Nizam of Hyderabad over the former kingdom of Golconda.

In the hour of his death, Aurangzeb, who had always shut his heart to the gentler influence of fatherly love, and by his coldness and distrust had repelled affection in his children, found himself practically abandoned. His eldest daughter, Zeb-un-Nisa, had died in 1702 in the prison to which her father had condemned her for complicity in the rebellion of Prince Akbar; and the Prince himself had breathed his last, an exile, in 1704. The Emperor's three remaining sons, Shah Alam, Azam and Kam Bakhsh, were far from Ahmednagar watching each other with hate and distrust, and each of them making his own preparations to contest the throne when the time arrived.

Death of Aurangzeb.

When, on February 20, 1707, the end came, the only watchers at Aurangzeb's bedside were his Georgian wife, Udipuri Begum, and his second daughter, Zinat-un-Nisa. His intrepid spirit fled at the hour of morning prayer, and, murmuring the words of the Mohammedan creed, his loyalty to which, though marred by his intolerance, had been the one truly great feature of his life, he breathed his last.

A testament was found under his pillow in which he had endeavoured to make a just division of his empire amongst his sons, in the futile hope of thus avoiding the fratricidal struggle of which he had set so terrible an example. The document ended with the cynical phrase, so typical of the Emperor's views on life:

"Never trust your sons, and ever keep in mind the saying, 'The word of a king is barren'." [1]

By his own desire, Aurangzeb's earthly remains were laid to rest in a plain grave, open to the sky, in the Holy Musulman sanctuary of Syed Zain-ud-Din, in the little town of Rauza near Daulatabad. The streets through which the funeral procession passed were silent and deserted; no tears were shed for the sovereign who had ruled his subjects but had never understood nor loved them.

And yet in the hard and unlovely life of this great monarch, which we have described at such length, there was just one genuine act of kindness, just one occasion upon

[1] Jadunath Sarkar, *History of Aurangzib*, vol. v. pp. 266 and 267.

which he allowed his better self to speak, and it received its recognition after his death

A few months later a little band of horsemen rode up to the shrine of Syed Zain-ud-Din, led by a figure richly clad and wearing on his head the stiff turban peculiar to the Mahrattas. It was Sahu on his way to claim the throne of Maharashtra. Before going to his rightful heritage, Sivaji's grandson felt the desire to kneel in prayer at the grave of the deadly enemy of his race, who to him had always been a kind protector.

The death of Aurangzeb brings our Pageant of India, with its ceaseless light and shade, its fierce hatreds and heroic loves, its almost quixotic chivalry and barbarous cruelty, to its conclusion.

The curtain rose with a stanza from Omar, the Tent-maker ; we will let it fall by quoting the Persian poet once more :

> 'Tis all a Chequer-board of Nights and Days,
> Where Destiny with Men for Pieces plays:
> Hither and thither moves, and mates, and slays,
> And one by one back in the Closet lays.

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